Divergence

Navigating the Technological Determinism of Human Obsolescence

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DIVERGENCE

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INTRODUCTION

Divergence is an investigation into humanity's path within the technological civilization and the practical solutions for human survival. The idea of technological determinism is that the major societal developments are largely inevitable if the fixed boundaries of human existence are known. We are interested in understanding the most significant imaginable societal change: the loss of human utility for the world system - human obsolescence. Assuming the presuppositions here are mostly correct, the main conclusion of this book is that only the completely self-sufficient and permanently quarantined communities are positioned to survive into the future as human beings.

Affirmation of life is woven into the fabric of this text. We have good reasons to deeply care about the future when we not only care about our individual lives but those of our progeny. In case you prioritize having an easy life, that is fine but this book might not be for you. One chapter is concerned with the practical solutions as to what one could do to make it through the turmoil. In case you disagree with the narrative presented I kindly request to be corrected on whichever minor or major flaw you discover. The twelve cornerstones that make up *Divergence* are the following:

I. SYSTEMS – The world is composed of competing self-propagating systems that self-modify to win in the short-term.

II. GENETIC ENGINEERING – Genetically edited humans will be vastly superior for all the tasks necessary for civilization.

III. CIVILIZATIONAL HARDWARE – Electronic information systems will ultimately displace biological information systems wholly due to structural advantages in speed and greater adaptability for specialization.

IV. SEED AI – If the method of natural selection has independently resulted in intelligence in several species such as humans, dolphins, and octopus: the same mechanism of selection will bring about artificial intelligence.

V. TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM – When humans exist in a system of competition with other humans the incentives for development are semi-deterministic.

VI. OBSOLESCENCE – Disregarding the possibility of societal collapse, human obsolescence will be guaranteed.

VII. DEMOCRATIZED WMD – Every year it gets progressively more likely that easily manufactured weapon technology with civilization-ending potential gets unleashed. Global mass surveillance is the only solution to stop the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

VIII. BIODEFENCE – There is essentially no method of defence against bioweapons or nanoweapons. Besides indiscriminate first-strike or total isolation.

IX. ELITES – Small groups of elite factions have the most impact in any system including in the world civilization. Recent history proves that the apparent elites of the present world are not afraid of using force or causing death. Replacing the elites does not produce change because the incentive structures remain the same.

X. LIMITS – There is a limited number of resources on the planet.

XI. COLLAPSE – Technological determinism can only be thwarted by total civilizational collapse. Civilizational collapse would likely be permanent as there would not be enough easily extractable energy deposits of coal and oil left to kickstart a second industrial revolution.

XII. SPECIATION – When the power asymmetry and natural interests of human populations grow divergent enough the result is speciation. Technological post-humans will not have conflict of interest with primitive humans.

I.

COMPETING FOR OBSOLESCENCE

SOUL IN THE SHELL
NEURAL AUGMENTATION
AI & AUTOMATION
INCENTIVES FOR ELITE FACTIONS
ANATOMY & BIOVIRUS
VIRTUAL EXISTENCE

Soul in the Shell

Our brain, our soul - is at a crossroads. The human brain made for wild nature is facing its twilight moment within the shell of our technological civilization. Regardless of what philosophical model one subscribes to, it is undoubtedly a consensus position that it is from within our brains that the world is generated out of. Desires, incentives, thoughts, feelings, originate from our brain. Or at least, the brain is where these things manifest.

Human souls in the state of nature are vulnerable, however. In the battles against nature and other souls, protective shells were created. Shells of organization, tools, and technique. Even if this shell of technology gave advantages to those who adopted it, the shell is growing a will of its own.

The prehistory of mankind is by far not a settled topic but is still firmly shrouded in mystery. New revelations are coming out along the years of those ancient times. Sometimes even quite fantastical. As far as our present civilization is concerned, the seeds for it seem to have been planted somewhere around 12000 years before the present time. Agriculture came to dominate due to its efficiency of generating storable units of energy from small plots of land. Hierarchical social structures beyond tribes emerged out of agriculture as specialization was a necessary component in making agriculture work. From the increasingly complex social organization and networks came the demand and possibility for new technologies to emerge. Even what we would consider rudimentary technology, requires the co-operation of many people.

This human civilization soon spread its tentacles through migration over every fertile corner of the Earth. It was made by humans and for humans - certain other animals had their roles too. While animals lacked sophisticated brains, they generated physical power that was essential for ploughing the fields, transporting goods, and aiding in warfare. These functional roles of animals still exist in the far-out fringes of the world, but industrialization has essentially dismantled the need for our companion animals. Industrialization replaced the large muscles of humans and animals with machines. Now only fine motor skills remain of economic value that has yet to be automated. The fate of the obsolete farm helper and wagon pulling horse was a sad one. Horses liberated from the hardship of labour were either ground to meat or became nothing but fun-things of the privileged few.

The essential value of the human masses for the world-civilization originates from their thought-producing brain. As I am here to tell you though, this presently held status is not immortally rooted in the foundation of our civilization. It will be the costliest mistake that your line of descent has ever made if you believe otherwise. The iron logic of efficiency will inevitably reveal: the brain of natural humans will not stay competitive in the context of civilization. To prepare for this, true understanding must be made of the underlying foundational factors. An ever-clearer view must be constructed of all the significant moving parts and their interactions. Once the system is understood to a sufficient degree, one must devise a strategy to ride out the cataclysm unscathed. Foresight cannot be left for tomorrow and the blurriness of circumstances cannot debilitate one from taking the necessary actions. When catastrophic events become obvious and too close to be ignored, it will already be far too late. Foresight regarding this must be practiced with uncompromising confidence. The world is a highly competitive place and to chill in easy times is a pathway to disaster. Perhaps the boulders will not roll over us within our lifetimes - but the more we carry now, the more manageable the burden will be for our descendants.

A slow-moving but certain guarantee of human obsolescence is found in genetic engineering. It is a non-speculative technology and it is loaded with strong incentives for adoption.[1] To know why genetic engineering is such a threat, it must be first established just how important genetics are in determining our characteristics. Which is a hard piece to swallow for many of us who has been indoctrinated with the egalitarian worldview. It simultaneously crashes the assumptions of aspiring social manipulators who wish they were able to reshape humans like clay if only they pull the correct levers in the environment. However, the apparent truth is what it is and there is no way around that.

Twin studies are especially interesting.[2][3][4] Twins reared separately and reunited as adults tend to have uncanny similarities that wouldn't be expected if environment is all that mattered. It must be mentioned that the nature-nurture dichotomy is a false one. As an intuitive example, imagine parenting. Parenting is often thought of as an environmental factor. However, it is genes that influence traits like personality and intelligence which contribute as big factors for parenting. Society is made up of people that have genes. Environment and genetics are inseparable.

Importantly for the topic of human obsolescence, genetics correlate with factors such as personality and cleverness.[5][6] These traits are integral to predicting our productive role within the ecosystem of civilization.[7][8] While these big traits are influenced by the complex interactions of thousands of genes, it is a non-negotiable fact that eventually their interactions will be mapped out to a sufficient degree to allow for effective large-scale genetic modification. It is a modest proposal that practical techniques of gene-editing will also see progress and increasingly precise tools will be found. Not a single credible expert doubts the technical feasibility of genetic engineering. The question is not if it is possible, but if it is ethical and what the incentives are.

With this knowledge of genetics, one cannot help but recognize his or her inevitable relative inferiority to the genetically enhanced humans of the future. Truly the only code of ethics that could protect human dignity would be one that had zero tolerance for any genetic modification. It is sadly predictable that the societies of the world civilization will not impose such restrictions on themselves. Not for long at least. Once a technological society mass-adopts genetic enhancement and its effects begin to dawn on other societies, normalization of gene manipulation will occur. The temptation presented by biotechnology is simply too vast to be ignored. In the Western world, the technology will probably be marketed as a solution for disease elimination and only covertly will be packaged with desirable modifications in traits such as conscientiousness, obedience, creativity, and inventiveness.

While the Western public is still against genetic modification, that will likely change rapidly once the system deems it necessary. Expect propaganda campaigns involving poor children in wheelchairs with rare genetic diseases. How could you ethically oppose fixing that? Targeted propaganda campaigns to shape the public opinion are neither new or rare.[9] It will be a slippery slope from curing inheritable diseases to more ambitious modifications. People who continue to oppose genetic engineering will not only be viewed as immoral but evil.

In 2018, the Chinese national He Jiankui got famous for creating the first genetically edited human babies. The twins that were born to HIV+ parents were successfully made immune to HIV. Some allege that the deleted gene also contributes to cognitive enhancement. The praise for the scientific breakthrough was followed by merited concern about bioethics. A year later after his experiment, Jiankui was sentenced to 3 years in prison by the Chinese authorities. This should not be taken at face value and interpreted as the People's Republic of China being in opposition to genetic engineering. He Jiankui's real crime was perhaps that his experiment was officially unauthorized, and he went to the international media with his results. Even if the PRC is in favour of genetic engineering, it would surely not endorse open experimentation by rogue scientists.

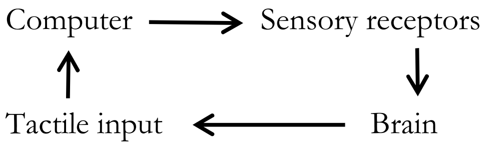
A nation such as China or even smaller ones like Japan could effortlessly achieve planetary hegemony in the mid-long term by enacting a policy in favour of genetic engineering. Especially an underdog nation with little resources and powerful enemies such as North Korea could view modification as the last hope to gain a stronger defence against outside pressure. This Trojan Horse of biotechnology simply has too much power potential. The incentives of using genetic engineering versus the cost of not adopting it paint a rather deterministic future.

If we cannot ban genetic engineering, should we embrace it? This presupposes trust in the service provider of modifications - that they will do exactly what they tell, and only that. So let us be generous and assume that those who offer the services of genetic engineering are pure of heart. Assuming they only do what is agreed upon, i.e., delete disease-contributing harmful genes and increase IQ and strength for example, the problem of human obsolescence is far from solved. The next step is acknowledging neural augmentation and artificial intelligence.

Neural Augmentation

Embracing genetic enhancement will not secure the value of humans for the world system. This is because no matter how smart the genetically enhanced people are, they will face a structural limitation in their quickness of mind. Biological information systems are at an inherent and irredeemable disadvantage in swiftness.[10] Electronic hardware will inevitably out-compete the biological brain. Speed is king as far as information processing is concerned. For the sake of argument, we might entertain the idea that a biological machine might eventually be created that has some inherent superior quality over electronic systems. However, such biological creatures would be just as radically un-human and alien to human beings as electronic systems are. The crucial takeaway is that the human brain appears to be structurally uncompetitive compared to electronic systems.

To tackle this problem, the proposal of some is cyborgism: interlinking of man and machine to keep humans relevant. Perhaps the most relevant figure to publicly work for this is entrepreneur and billionaire Elon Musk. He has argued that humans are already cyborgs and merely the user interfaces between our mind and machines happens to be slow. This information loop between a human and the computer he is using has so far been:



The aim of cyborgism is to cut off the bottlenecks of sensory reception and tactile input from this information loop. Which means directly connecting the human brain with computers through neural augmentation. However, the necessity of sensory experience has also worked as an effective firewall so far - no matter how dependent on screens we have so far been, we have remained free to walk away from the computer. Neural augmentation would be different and there will not be any turning back after implants are infused with one's head. As with all technologies, neural augmentation will be a progressive development and the technology will not be born ready but mature over the years. Although neural augmentations are hard they do not seem physically impossible. Out of the officially known projects regarding neural augmentation so far, the most advance appears to be Elon Musk's Neuralink.

What is obsolescence? It means the loss of technical utility to achieve a set of tasks. That is what jobs are, series of tasks with desired outcomes. To execute those tasks, there must be a machine and so far, that machine has been the human. Brains are however generalist machines and not infinitely malleable for any desired set of tasks. The underlying reason for obsolescence is found in the constraints of the basic architecture that makes up the human brain. What are the structural limitations of the brain? Several characteristics enforce limiting parameters of what the brain is fundamentally capable of. The temperature must be extremely specific and the brain's heat dissipation ability is peaked.[12][13] The brain evolved for a certain environment where it benefited from being able to interpret only a tiny fraction of incoming signals. Neurons are of a specific size and since the brain can only be of a certain size, this limits the number of neurons that can be packed in there.[14] These are only some of the hard, physical constraints imposed upon our brains. Purpose-built artificial thinking machines are not constrained in the same way that the biological brain is.

Ultimately though, neural augmentation is a hopeless fight against the inevitable law of efficiency. The essential value of the brain is under the process of deconstruction – brains are being replaced piece-by-piece by computer. Any practical task done by the brain can be done by a computer. Even simple, narrow AI will have destructive consequences for the utility of the masses of humanity. There is not an infinite demand for mediocre generalist machines. Neural augmentation might succeed at some level, but in time the most efficient brains will be those that circumvent the biological part wholly.

The incentives of the neural augmentation provider cannot be forgotten when thinking about neural augmentation. If such augmentation can significantly increase the power of one's mind: the provider of the mass-market augmentation will have a profound incentive to radically curb the free will of those who get the augmentation. If a computer enhances the thinking capability of someone too much, they become a threat to others. Then we get a dilemma. Either neural augs elevate humans to such power that they must be chained, or they fail to empower humans to a sufficient degree to combat obsolescence.

AI & Automation

The surge of artificial intelligence (AI) is the defining event of the 21st century. Those who do not understand it cannot prepare for the largest shift in history. The basic gist of the AI problem is that AI is gradually chipping away the Human factor from human civilization. Even the simpler algorithms that we have today are already doing it: humans and organizations use algorithms to make decisions because that is what benefits them. There is no reason to think this development will not continue in the same direction. We adopt AI input whenever we can because it is beneficial for us. The humans that get ahead are those who adopt the most AI influence.

After a long time of slower developments, the last few years have been a surge for AI and related fields. Big wins have been for example AlphaZero‘s mastery over the games of chess and Go. Palantir AI and Clearview AI have demonstrated practical implementation and commercial utility for machine learning algorithms. Google’s Sycamore and the Chinese Jiuzhang quantum computers broke the records for processing speed. AlphaFold has predicted protein unfolding which is significant for computational biology. Boston Dynamics has constructed robots with amazing dexterity. GPT-3 writes coherent articles from small inputs. Exquisite art has been created by algorithms for several years – a bad sign particularly for those who believe the enigmatic power of creativity is uniquely a human gift. Simply being aware of these current peaks of technology should make one highly skeptical of the idea that there will somehow pop up a field where human brains are unsurpassable by machines.

The final behemoth that humanity will deliver birth to will be a self-coding Seed AI and it is reasonable to expect powerful Seed AIs to appear within this century. The skills of human programmers will at some point not be the constrictive limitations of potential for AI development. True artificial intelligence will be programmed by humans only in their starting stage and become self-writing and self-modifying after that. It is yet hard to say how this will emerge into existence in practice. Perhaps the playbook will be copied from the birth of human intelligence and evolution. Maybe this is achieved by the construction of an artificial electronic environment where AIs combat against other mutated AIs – with billions of iterations and the reward of survival goes for the most intelligent and efficient machines. From similar natural selection emerged biological intelligence, assuming the theory of evolution to be true. We should be able to conclude that the same process could also work electronically but only significantly faster. Dolphins and octopuses are additional proof of natural selection giving birth to intelligence. Humans are not a one-off miracle. What requires a million years of natural selection for biological agents, will happen a lot faster electronically.

Assuming those who create the AI can keep control of it, the will of a single AI-master will be empowered to enact almost any practical goal. That is without needing to delegate tasks to other humans. At that point, other humans will be nothing but threats to the AI-master. Whoever wins the race for AI will have a dangerous incentive. Whether to neutralize other people, lest he is neutralized by someone else. World leaders understand this dilemma. As Vladimir Putin remarked in 2017: “Whoever leads in AI will rule the world”.[15]

Human obsolescence means that yes, even we will be unemployed eventually. With many having built their identity around their professional identity, that will keep psychologists busy for a while until psychologist-chatbots replace psychologists too. Within this discourse, the most despicable are the white-collar people with unmerited smugness who think their degrees make them irreplaceable and safe, and it is only low-level work that is at risk of automation. Automation does not care how hard a task is for a human to accomplish. Often, it is the opposite. What is effortless for humans is often hard for a machine. See: Moravec's paradox. Most people do not think their jobs can be automated. Most people also do not have the engineering mind and understanding of what is technically possible and what is not. They do make the correct judgment that their job the way they do it would be hard for a machine to do. What they forget is that while work tasks are currently built with a human worker in mind, to achieve the same outcome the intermediary steps will be different for a machine.

In the present state, automation has the added leverage of being indirectly subsidized in virtually all countries. There are additional cost and risks to human workers besides their wage: limited working hours, insurances, unpredictability, office facilities, and so forth. Machines work around the clock, will not complain, and do not pay taxes. The benefits of human workers compared to machines, on the other hand, are few. Human labour is only cheap if it is disregarded that it needs roughly twenty years of schooling and upkeep before humans are ready to enter entry-level jobs. In addition to another twenty years of expected retirement. While robots have construction and maintenance costs, humans are not without them either. If the-powers-that-be anticipated the eventual automation, their support of anti-natalism and abortion rights might have been a rational calculation for resource conservation.

A common lie we tell ourselves is that we prefer the human connection in customer service. There is no way we would divulge our concerns to a robot therapist, right? What are our revealed preferences in this matter? Observation on any field where automation has had a significant impact will tell us that the human input was low on the totem pole of priorities and consumer behaviour is driven by completely other factors. Factors like price and functionality dominate far above the human touch in priorities.

What fields will be automated first? Automation happens at the intersection of how hard it is to automate the process and how economically profitable it will be. Generally, the more common a job is the earlier is the threat of automation. The transportation industry is often used as an example when the talk is about fields that are thought to be soon dominated by robots. That is because jobs in that field are some of the most common jobs and automating driving is relatively easier because traffic is a game of clearly defined rules and logic. The combined salaries of truckers make it a field where automation will be extremely profitable. On the opposite, imagine something as obscure as a ballet teacher. It is hard for a machine to do or teach ballet, and there are not many ballet teacher positions to be replaced. The more logical and less subjective a field is, the earlier is the threat of automation. Ultimately though, it is important to understand that nobody will be spared because the human brain simply cannot compete with purpose-built machines. None of us is above human obsolescence, especially not our children or grandchildren. This is the painful reality that must be accepted and truly internalized. What will remain of the human soul when the shell takes over?

Incentives for Elite Factions

The discourse of existential threat and the future are often divorced from the integral strategic realities and human factors. In the conventional view, visions of the future tend to be highly utopian with machines being seen as tools for liberation from work, struggle, and conflict. Even the dystopian images of the future are typically tame: they imagine that the world might suffer from overpopulation, resource shortages, social alienation, and of oppressive governments. That is, mere extrapolated and tolerable problems of the current day. Yet they are still liveable and not that bad. Utopian and quasi-dystopian fantasies are understandable motivators to bear with the present age. All the hardship and toiling of modern life would not feel very meaningful if the future were not a promise for the better.

To truly gain an understanding of the technological future we must have an accurate vision of the powers at play. The first stumbling block we need to rid ourselves of is the concept of humanity as a monolithic hive-mind organism. This is because "humanity" has so far been a terrible model of reality as it is not a real force that influences this world. The alternative? We already know the world is composed of individuals and of individuals that work together to achieve goals. To paint a useful map of the forces acting upon this world - they are best understood as factions for even the most powerful individuals act as mere central lightning rods of larger interests.

Not all factions are made equal. Which is an understatement of the disproportionate impact of the most powerful factions. Whatever the area of analysis, a small number of factions cause most of the consequences. Factions are neither homogenous nor closed but fractal, overlapping, and intertwined. This fuzziness is surprisingly no problem. We do not need to know the specific actors and their agendas to predict their incentives and goals to a high degree.

Elite is a word with high emotional charge, often used in the context of conspiracy or abrasively. However, in this context, it is merely to signify the class of people with a disproportionate amount of influence. Elite faction is a useful categorization for the most powerful human networks. Following the acknowledgment of human obsolescence, the obvious question is: how will the various elite factions around the world answer the problem? A conventional view of current-day geopolitics is that of states competing for power and leverage. What states in reality represent are their elite factions. As of 2020, the two major competitive factions appear to be the Western Elite and the Chinese Elite. The West is centred around the United States of America, and its allies are best thought of as vassals of Washington hegemony. The vassals are tightly coupled with America in all matters: politically, militarily, culturally, economically, and spiritually. They cannot be imagined as separate entities. Other relatively independent contenders besides the West/China split appear to be Russia, Iran, and North Korea. While these three appear to be independent, they are simultaneously solid allies of China, having had joint military exercises with the Chinese military. That is a strong signal of the alliance as military exercises imply the share of military capabilities. This information ranks high among the most sensitive matter for any nation.

The important takeaway from this knowledge is that the elite factions are indeed in competition. Factions in competition do not have the liberty to act without minding their competition. This is the chain of logic that dictates much of world events. It eliminates the hope of controlling hazardous technology such as AI or gene-editing. When competition is genuine, it is also existential.

Reflecting on the incentives is when things get interesting. The convergent totality of near-future technologies is of unfathomable power. Any faction that gets on top of them will for a moment have both the means and the incentive to eviscerate other factions as a threat. That would entail either enslavement or destruction of other parties. Every faction is also aware of others knowing this strategic reality. Stable multi-polarity with a balance of power is not a realistic option due to the overwhelming speed at which potential technology can incapacitate enemies. Cold war era doctrine of nuclear mutually assured destruction worked only due to the technical limitations of ballistic missiles that were slow and far from stealthy. This allowed for detection and response in the event of an attack. In the future to come, all the competitive factions will be working with a degree of warranted paranoia.

The perception-clouding fog of war is tolerable when the capabilities of the enemy can be estimated to some level that will not be true in the future. None could be ever sure when the other parties would gain mastery over a new war-decisive weapon with the capability to immediately wipe out their adversaries. It would be hard if not impossible to defend against such unknown angles of attack. The first faction taking the initiative to eliminate the others will enjoy the benefit of a tremendous first-strike advantage. It must be understood that the designer vanguard of revolutionary technology alone can design a defence against it. In the past, this has not been an issue, as movement was slow, and defenders had time to adapt to novel weapons. This means that defence against revolutionary technology is hard.

Manhattan Project was the original development project of nuclear weapons by the United States that started in 1939.[16] It is an interesting operation to know about in four ways. First, it proves that it is possible to have a gigantic black project composed of 130,000 workers and a price tag equivalent of modern $23B and keep it a secret from foreign spies and insider traitors. Second, it gives us an example of how through compartmentalization many people can work on a complex project with few understanding the final product. Third, it shows how irrelevant the moral values of scientists are. If asked, how many of the scientists were in favour of killing Japanese civilians? Probably not many of them. As shown by the project, it is not the ethical backbone of scientists that carries weight in the world of conflict. Fourth and last, Manhattan Project showcased the sheer impact of revolutionary tech. What went through the heads of Japanese Generals in 1945 when Nagasaki and Hiroshima were pulverized by American nuclear weapons? Everything they thought they knew about warfare, was instantly changed on the fundamental level by an unconventional weapon. Generals of today have learned their lesson from that.

The geopolitics of this century is not restricted to state actors. Billionaires and non-government organizations are equally equipped to pose a danger to everyone else. The number of players on the game board is a factor in itself. Dialogue is tougher to manage when thousands of powerful agents are expected to reach agreements. Without any doubt, the dilemma of democratized weapons of mass destruction and mass surveillance will be amongst the most significant technical issue of the 21st century elite factions. The odds of discovering an easily constructed civilization-ending technology increases every year. Any non-dominant underdog force such as North Korea, Iran, or a random disgruntled billionaire could decide that it is better to take down the world rather than allow their enemies to dominate it. A Canadian research team that synthesized horsepox in 2018 concluded that anyone with $100k and a small team of researchers could do it.[17]

The only obvious technical solution to mass destruction is global ever-present mass surveillance. Who could implement such on a global scale? Only a hegemonic, unipolar world government. Compulsory mind-reading and total loss of privacy inside our brains really would not be a far-fetched solution to eliminate the risk of mass destruction. It is unlikely that anything more sophisticated and less intrusive than that could do it. Even a shred of privacy could risk the fate of civilization. My guess for the greatest danger to civilization is a strong actor – such as a millionaire or billionaire – who sees the logic of inevitable and necessary total loss of privacy and decides that he does not want that. All it would take is one gifted, freedom-driven individual. Pandora's Box is once again being opened. Not many will have the foresight of the dynamics to prepare accordingly.

Anatomy & Biovirus

For the life-affirmative who desire to live, they must accept harsh facts of reality that are not always pro-social or considerate of things like individual happiness. One of these facts being that other people pose a threat to them. No less than an existential threat.

Only a few years ago the subject of human-engineered biovirus was different. Back then it registered as a yet another boring imaginary threat that nerds are needlessly getting anxious about. Most people that came across it did not think much about it.

Viruses were not part of social reality as they are now in 2021. From this perspective, COVID was a well-timed accident to happen in 2020. No longer can the topic be hand-waved away as we were blessed with a warning of cosmic proportions. The early footage of the streets of Wuhan in January 2020 and the unusually stringent early Chinese lockdowns made some of us even believe that this would "be the big one". It was assumed that the Chinese officials must have had a fairly good idea of how bad the virus is if they were ready to shut down all economic activity for a large portion of the country. As time would later reveal, COVID-19 was not as deadly and less of a concern than might have been initially thought, but it served as a warning of what could be.

As has been established, world events are largely the results of competition between elite factions. Any individual must accept that he is not insulated from this but is part of chains of power that give power to certain elite factions. Elite factions usually try to obscure and insulate themselves from direct harm for obvious reasons. Therefore, an opposing elite faction might have no alternative but to attack the power chain that gives power to the elite faction. This attack in the lighter sense could mean disruption of society through economic sabotage or the insertion of harmful propaganda. In a heavier sense, it would be to cause death or injury to the target population. If COVID-19 did anything, it gave proof of concept for any faction that wants to seriously target another faction.

The ineffectiveness of COVID-19 is the sole reason I do not believe it was released with nefarious intent from the BSL-4 laboratory in Wuhan as some have suggested. As has been apparent since early 2020 however, the Wuhan laboratory is very likely the place of origin.[18] This has so far been acknowledged by only some of the official institutions.

The truth of the matter is that a true bioweapon engineered by a top-tier research group would potentially be so devastating that there would be zero confusion about its human origin. Picture this: maximal incubation time. Maximal transmissibility. Maximal lethality. Theoretically, nothing is stopping a virus to be perfectly engineered with these traits and crafted for maximal suffering. It could even have a close to 100% casualty rate of a target population. If not directly, then indirectly, for no societal system can sustain itself if a significant proportion of its working population dies and the essential workers will be scared from leaving their homes to upkeep logistics and key infrastructure. Engineered bioviruses will be of a completely different magnitude than even the worst transmissible disease that can occur naturally such as the Black Death or the Spanish flu. Naturally occurring viruses mutate by happenstance, not through conscious effort. That is why they tend to be weak and not particularly harmful to their host. Random chance simply will not produce a virus of similar lethality to one whose parameters are engineered by intelligence.

The word incubation is the reason why it seems self-evident that one ought to seriously consider the idea of total off-grid separation from mainstream society. A virus with an incubation time of 1-2 months would have plenty of enough time to reach even the most remote yet connected human settlements. Viruses that have a long incubation time, are also ones that nobody is prepared to avoid. By the time a proper biovirus strikes society, we are already dead and there will not be a news organization telling us to wear a mask and wash our hands. The journalists will be equally knocked out or on the verge of perishing. It is simply impossible to live normally within society and to interact with people, and not be at catastrophic existential risk.

To be precise, there is nothing particularly fundamental that makes biological viruses solely the primary threat for the large masses of mankind. Instead, the root of the problem is the inherent vulnerability fundamental to the biological system of the human body. It does not take much, but surgically targeted microscopic machines in the essential cells of the body to wholly eliminate life from a human being. An advanced research facility would be able to build mechanic delivery systems on the nanoscale and deliver poison like botulinum for billions.

Nanotechnology refers to technology that is built on the scale of individual atoms and molecules. This genre of emergent technology has nearly limitless potential: nanomaterials, nanorobotics, nanomedicine, and so forth. It would almost be faster to list all the fields that nanotech cannot revolutionize. Since the topic is of immense breadth and I would rather not repeat information that is readily available online, I will focus only on nanotechnology from the perspective of human obsolescence. Let us begin by stating that it is for a good reason that nanotechnology is recognized as one of the bigger existential threats for humanity. When the ability to construct things on the nanoscale spreads, bad actors will also have access to it. And as the world civilization still has internal competition among high-tech factions, it is not feasible to restrict the technology. We can somewhat restrict our own technology and those we rule over, but not restrict our adversaries.

Pretty much the only potential emergent technology which would be a net positive for human safety is the nanosuit. Such a suit would be a machine that would control the flow of molecules in and out of the human body. Ideally, it would allow human perspiration and defecation, while controlling the inflow of air and food matter from harmful substances. The technical feasibility and affordability of this can only be speculated. A conservative estimate would be that at least in the foreseeable future, there will not be mass adoption of effective nanosuits. If there was one invention that could save technological civilization, it would be this one.

While high-tech air-analysing nanosuits could serve as protection against biovirus, it is hard to imagine their widespread adoption by the masses. Their cost and inconvenience are perhaps too great for even the wealthy to wear. The biovirus and nanoweapons threat is surely one that most would prefer to ignore completely. For most people, the price to pay (isolation) for the benefit (risk-elimination) is not worth it. It must be remembered that one does not have to do isolation alone. Sizeable self-sufficient communities could completely insulate themselves from infectious threats if they so desired. I see no viable future where people breathe freely in proximity of each other. A strategy of formlessness in the shape of self-imposed isolation is the only defence.

The fundamentals of warfare have always been about wrecking the human body and the armour that might surround it. The human body is a fixed constant and everything else revolves around it. A critical problem becomes that this human body is increasingly vulnerable. Technological progress tends to produce new inventive ways to disable the body from functioning and defence technology tends to lag behind destruction in development. The favoured methods of destruction have so far been blunt or piercing damage through skin tissue, but with emerging technologies, the new dangers are in the microscopic range. We are facing threats that the human body has no defence against.

One obvious technological development that needs to be acknowledged are autonomous weapon systems. While some concern has been raised about the fears of machines turning against unintended targets and the ethical question about if machines should be allowed to decide over life and death, ultimately ethics always get steamrolled to meet technical demands. Nagorno-Karabakh war of 2020 proved drones to be the king of the battlefield and the transition from human-controlled to autonomous is only a question of time. That is because there are several benefits to autonomic systems. First, it protects the lives of soldiers. Second, it allows for performance that humans are not capable of. A limiting factor in fighter jet development is the human body's ability to tolerate G forces.[19] Other machines too would be more optimized for performance if the human operator were not a necessary factor to consider. Third, autonomy creates a tighter chain of command. When given a choice, military officers want their strategic vision executed without superfluous middlemen. Future wars can be imagined as officers standing next to drone operators that operate whole fleets of semi-autonomous drone units at once. Fourth, autonomy allows machines to operate in places where remote-controlled machines are susceptible to electronic jamming.

An optimistic reminder that is sometimes pointed out in existential risk discourse is that biological warfare was successfully banned multilaterally in the aftermath of the First World War. I claim that this was more likely determined by technical demands rather than anything else. The thing about chemical weapons like mustard gas is that they have historically not been very practical weapons of war. They have been hard to aim at targets and traditional weapon systems achieve the same objectives more efficiently. As demonstrated in the recent Syrian Civil War, chemical weapons are mostly useful when trying to instigate foreign involvement through false flag operations.[20] That seems to be the only effective use of them in the modern day.

Another optimistic thought concerning powerful weapons is that even during the Cold War the US and USSR managed to reach a mostly peaceful equilibrium due to the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction. Also known as nuclear deterrence. Neither party could stop the other one from retaliating if one of them were to attack. However, this balance of terror was forged by lucky circumstances caused by the technical parameters fundamental to nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are incredibly expensive and hard to make. Because of the resource and technical demands, they cannot be created covertly but require massive state backing. The cost is what limits the number of participants: the fewer participants, the fewer targets to retaliate against in a MAD scenario and the more identifiable a potential aggressor is. Another factor intrinsic to nuclear weapons is that they are relatively slow and hard to hide. The balance of MAD is only possible when you can identify the perpetrator and respond. It must be understood that these factors may not apply to emerging weapons of mass destruction and the peace of MAD might not reappear. Even respected thinkers of the early Cold War era such as John von Neumann and Bertrand Russell were advocates for pre-emptive nuclear strikes against the USSR within the brief period when the US still had the nuclear monopoly in the late 1940s.[21] All the elite factions capable of contesting the throne of civilization have top-level thinkers that will be in a similar position. For the brief moments of technological supremacy, they will have to ponder pre-emptive striking or risking defeat at a later date.

Virtual Existence

With the inevitable obsolescence of humans within civilization, the fate of the masses of humanity will be an interesting question. Perhaps the most common suggestion is that obsolescence will be a blessing, for then we are free to do whatever we want: paint landscape art, travel, party, exercise, read… to be fully consumed in whatever preferred leisure activity one has without the burden of economic productivity. This utopian vision is what I too once subscribed to. It is not with any degree of delight that I have come to find the utopian vision naive. Nor do I get gratification from being the cynical doomsayer that delivers anxiety to you. Dark times are the historical baseline. Our temporary liberation from the harshness of circumstances could not last for all eternity.

It bears repeating that it is not democratic global consciousness that drives events but elite factions and their special interests that are the primary movers of world events. Was the global consciousness in favour of the extinction of animal species such as Western Black Rhinoceros? No, but it is the interests of the few that dominate. In the case of rhinos, it was the special interests of the poachers and their clients that caused the extinction of the rhinos. Certainly against the wishes of everyone else on Earth. When incentive structures determine something to be lined up a certain way, it is rare to see human actions conflict with them. What are the ideologies of the most powerful elite factions? Their actions, in contrast to their words, would indicate a largely realpolitikal attitude for gaining and preserving power. This pragmatic stance seems dominant even amongst the openly ideological or religious powerful communities. Western neoliberals, the Chinese Communist Party, the Islamic State of Iran are a few examples of such communities. Nothing in their actions suggests that they are genuinely otherworldly idealists. Instead, they are pragmatic power players. This would indicate that their treatment of obsolete people will too, be pragmatic and not idealists.

What is the technical problem with obsolescence? Resources and available energy are finite while the demand for them is infinite. Nothing short of magic fusion energy could shift these physical constraints. If everyone is to have a 1st world lifestyle, that will demand a lot of resources and energy. There is the environmental impact also: more humans equal more pollution. To put it succinctly: there are significant costs in keeping billions of people around. In addition to the cost of humanity, they will pose a threat to the post-obsolescence new world order. It is only a matter of time when democratized weapons of mass destruction leak to the wrong ambitious hands if nothing is done. To curb the possibility of that happening, at the very least a system of ever-present mass surveillance must be installed. The options for the dominant elite factions will be few: total enslavement of the post-obsolete masses or culling. The latter option would be the only one to remove both the threat and cost of post-obsolete humans.

After Edward Snowden's whistleblowing of the National Security Agency (NSA) in 2013, global mass surveillance shifted from mere conspiracy theory to undeniable fact. All online content is monitored. It is self-explanatory why this is done. If you do not try to monitor the world, someone else will do it and they will have more information than you. The important thing to understand about the future of mass surveillance is that it will permeate everything, and the days of privacy will be over. Incentives and feasibility make an unstoppable duo.

The old aphorism knowledge is power still stands true today. Surveillance gives power over circumstances and is not only useful for gathering information but steering people towards desired ends. This is one way how social media platforms generate revenue: they create profiles of the users based on their demographics, interests, and habits, and show precisely targeted ads. From the point of view of state actors, this steering will be used to promote behaviour that is deemed favourable to the state. With surveillance comes knowledge not only of the individual but of the larger herd. When enough data has been gathered, pattern recognition algorithms can deduce patterns that are not obvious to individual observers. Eventually, these algorithms will be so powerful and interlinked to large datasets that they will be able to predict things about individuals based on minor details. How do you make your hair? What clothes do you wear? How confident is your gait? Do you keep eye contact or not? What is your heart rate? Aggregating small signals and comparing them to the datasets will build a personality profile that predicts a person's inclinations and actions. Once implemented, these tools will aid their users in detecting threats and directing attention towards them. This mass surveillance will be foremostly utilized to curb the possibility of democratized weapons of mass destruction. Since it is not possible to only selectively monitor known places where bad stuff could happen, global surveillance must reach every place on earth and all the time.

Human beings radiate constantly information about themselves into their surroundings. Picking up these signals for analysis happens with sensors like cameras and wearable electronics like smartphones. Technological progress will make sensors gradually ever cheaper and it will be in the interest of powerful entities to collect as much data of people as they can. Even if Internet-of-Things is not forced upon all citizens, all commercial and larger apartment buildings might by default implement “smart doors” to monitor the movement of people. It is from the small incentives like defending apartments from break-ins how the worldwide system of surveillance will be built.

Not even an internal retreat will necessarily guard one’s privacy against it. If brain reading gets so advanced as to allow translating neuron activity into words, we will not enjoy privacy even within our own heads. The human body is what makes the global panopticon inevitable. We cannot stop radiating information about ourselves into our surroundings.

A possible effect of the global panopticon is that petty crime will end completely. Ever-present identification will be so thoroughly normalized that it will not be possible to walk on a street without one’s presence being picked up by technological gadgets. However, if the theory of anarcho-tyranny is correct, it might be possible that there will be deliberately engineered loopholes for petty crime to continue due to the unwillingness to enforce the law. Criminality might occasionally benefit the system from the perspective of certain people. For the obedient, good citizen, the disappearance of crime might sound good.

However, the total elimination of crime will also mean the elimination of dissent. That is a painful problem you either get or you do not. Human obsolescence and the total elimination of dissent is not a combination I am looking forward to.

Assuming there is a shred of respect for human dignity among the coming victorious elites, the most optimistic scenario from the perspective of the masses is mandatory and permanent virtual reality existence. From the point of view of the elite factions, it would be the only way besides outright culling to shrink the cost and threat of humanity. VR simulation of life is less consumptive of energy and resources than doing things in the real world. Plugged in virtual reality, the masses would be neutralized as a threat. Many people would probably even prefer such a life to their current one. Are there not many who already spend all their leisure time playing video games? Imagine video games, but fully immersive and scheduled methamphetamine shots to keep you happy. This mode of existence would perhaps more resemble lucid dreaming than anything else.

For those revolted by the vision of virtual existence – there is hope in Speciation.

II.

ACTING ON SPECIATION

HUMAN SPECIATION
WIELDING THE TOOLS OF POWER
PATH OF FORMLESSNESS
SYSTEMIC COLLAPSE

Human Speciation

The common definition of a species is a population of living beings that can produce fertile offspring. Speciation is the phenomenon of formerly compatible populations diverging into many. As I am here to remind you, humans are animals among other things, and are not above the evolutionary dynamics. Human speciation is neither an idea that has gone unacknowledged by science fiction authors. The earliest example being H.G. Wells' Eloi and Morlock as possible future developments of human beings. It was probably in the aftermath of Darwin's theory of evolution that planted the seeds for these ideas. Divergence of ecology will favour different traits and with enough time create new races and ultimately new species.

Human speciation is always occurring, and our prehistory is not different from that. The genetic history of Homo Sapiens remains somewhat of a mystery though - the conventional “recently out of Africa” theory is contested by several other hypothesis. One of these being the multiregional hypothesis which posits a more ancient origin for the last common ancestors and a more significant role of interspecies mixing.[22] As has been proven, the descendants of Europeans and East Asians have genes that are uniquely Neanderthal.[23] All of the present human races are a product of regional adaption over long times and inter-mixing with archaic hominids. This is the most recent understanding. While the different races are still able to produce fertile offspring, human speciation was well underway which is the reason why we can today see differences between the human races.

There are few truly uncontacted tribes left in this world. Most of them in the vast tropical rainforests of the Amazon and New Guinea. One of the last uncontacted tribes is in North Sentinel - an island in the Indian Ocean. In 2018, the Christian missionary John Chau wanted to spread the word of the Christian God and headed on his final trip to this island of North Sentinel. As was predictable, the isolated natives killed him. The Indian authorities decided not to pursue legal justice against the natives. This is an early signifier of speciation: civilizational beings are no longer acknowledging primitive peoples as equally human and similar to themselves. The environmental conditions have diverged to such an extent that we inhabitants of civilization no longer consider the primitives as threats or competitors that fight for the same resources. Primitive people are seen more as zoo-animal curiosities. This is a process of speciation, that is also accelerating: while land still has value for resource extraction for the citizens of civilization, their domain of existence is increasingly in the ethereal informational realm. The war within civilization has transferred to shaping our perception of reality instead of war over tangible resources. The lives and wishes of primitives like the Sentinel Island inhabitants do not intersect or conflict with the demands of civilization. This is what saves them from our cruelty.

In Hugo de Garis' The Artilect War, it is hypothesized that the future will inevitably hold an existential conflict between pro-human Terrans and anti-human Cosmists. The latter sees humanity's destiny to be the construction of a strong AI and the bringing forth of technological singularity. Along in the process, to give up their humanity wholly as redundant inefficiencies. Their opposing Terrans wish to remain human and instead attempt to subjugate technology under the will of human beings. In the absence of a total civilizational collapse, this remains the most plausible view of the future. The question is how much of the human part should be kept and replaced by not-human. The anti-human Cosmists certainly have an upper hand in this struggle due to not subscribing to arbitrary self-limitations.

Can real human beings make it out alive through the future conflicts? I claim that Yes, they can. The conflict between civilizational people and primitive people is not unavoidable. War does not originate from power differentials but arises out of irresolvable conflicts of interests. These conflicts tend to only occur when the creatures are of comparable power, for comparable power tends to come from comparable interests. However, with speciation, there will come a fundamental divergence of basic interests. What is the relation between the bear and the butterfly in the woods? They share the same forest realm, and they breathe the same air. There is a great power differential between them. Yet, they leave each other alone. Their existence has diverged to such an extent as to make conflict unnecessary, even bizarre as a thought. They do inflict indirect influence upon each other but not direct.

The strategy of non-participation is for sure not a guarantee of human survival. There is a chance that plain matter will remain of such importance, as to warrant the world civilization to maximally extract the Earth of its surface matter. Perhaps the most dystopian view is that Earth would become one big continuous strip mine. It is quite unlikely that civilization would purposefully go out of its way to genocide primitive peoples, but there is a real risk of it happening inadvertently. The actions taken within the technological civilization may, for example, turn our Earth inhospitable. Geoengineering the biospehere, i.e., manipulating the weather chemically or dimming the sun are some of the known potential risks for humans. Many more will certainly unfold within this century. Despite all these risks, I wish to paint the vision: imagine primitive humans to live in relative harmony with inter-planetary post-human.

The line between lunacy and open-mindedness is thin and most attempt to keep a distance from lunacy by shutting their minds off completely from novel alternatives. However, to grasp the future totality, unknown forces and even outlandish possibilities must be kept in mind. Even the all-dominating factors of technology and inter-factional competition can become mere side notes to something much bigger. The big what-ifs of our age that need to be shortly addressed is the possibility of extra-terrestrials and extra-dimensionals. Considering the amount witness testimonies of anomalous unidentified flying objects and other mysterious events, the existence of aliens cannot be written off as pure cookery. The alternative is that the detected high-level technology encountered originate from secret military programs that break the current understanding of physics, which would be almost as big of a revelation as alien existence. There is also the possibility that there are layers in the universe beyond the knowledge modern physics, what we might call extra dimensions.

Unknown to most people, parapsychological research has been carried out by level-headed researchers, and phenomenon such as extrasensory perceptions, precognition, telepathy, reincarnation and psychokinesis are not without proof.[24][25][26][27][28] There could even be complete beings of extradimensional nature if we posit that the religious and spiritual experiences of many people across the ages are not just misfiring neurons but reflections from a deeper reality. Even if one did dismiss it all as pure lunacy, it must be acknowledged that it is quite silly to suggest that we are the lucky few who just happened to be born into a time when physics finally figured it all out for all eternity. Even when observable patterns of nature might work well with certain models, there still can be yet undiscovered models that make it all fit together even better. That has been the history of scientific discovery in a nutshell: models that predicted nature well were overturned by something else that often had no relation to the original model. No one can deny that much of what is today considered a boring fact would not so long ago be utterly mind-blowing. The limitations of modern science are born from the restriction of measuring equipment. It would be quite silly to claim that all of reality is only found within the scope of presently available technological instruments. It is plausible that even within our lifetime we might enter a *spectral revolution* that shatters our worldview of the physical realm as proposed by Dr. Jason Reza Jorjani.

Wielding the Tools of Power

In this epoch, the problem of human obsolescence is the mother of all problems. The only question left to answer: do we want to live? If we say No, we may do as we please. If the answer is a resounding Yes, one must single-mindedly chain all his energy towards actions that serves the path one has taken. That is if one truly desires to make it. The alternatives forward for the life-affirmative are one of the following:

A). Fight for control of technological civilization
B). Overturn the technological civilization
C). Live outside the technological civilization

There is no easy way out. How attached are you to your humanity? One must make a deep evaluation of his personal resources, dreams and endurance. These factors must be compared with the risks associated with each of the options. For transparency, I might reveal my personal choice to be C). The content of the Wilderness Option chapter focuses exclusively on that alternative. The allure of civilizational power must be shortly addressed though. It is possible that some of you have a legitimate ability to contest all the other elite factions in the quest for power. Why would someone choose this path?

Technology enhances the natural powers of its possessors. Medical technology prevents the decay of time, giving its users an unnaturally long lifespan besides resistance towards illness. Technology can make invisible things visible and visible things invisible. Social technology concentrates power, gives wealth, and allows dominion over others. It has the power to see the past and control the present. Those few who condemn it despite its potential for good, are called madmen for disregarding it. Most believe they can fight the forces of evil with the help of technology. They should be careful lest they be consumed by it, for what few understand is that technology has a will of its own. Those who use technology, are equally used and subsumed by technology.

Technological instrumentalism is the thought that technology is a neutral force that can be wielded by human individuals. Which is simply untrue if reflected upon. Humans are in ever-present competition and are geared towards fulfilling their desires. When technology constructs this environment around us it is humans that are steered in the direction determined by the presence of technology. Imagine any specific technology not existing and consider how inter-human dynamics would change accordingly.

Realistically speaking, nobody reading this is a member of an inner circle that is capable of contesting for technological world domination. Few are even capable of thinking about it at all – the scale is so grandiose, and the consequences are of such magnitude, that the reality of it seems more like fiction. However, the great power players in this world are not as clueless or impotent about it as the average person. Who are the true power factions? Hard to say, but some evidently influential people and cliques have demonstrated understanding of what it is all about. Pentagon is informed on AI.[29] Vladimir Putin is informed. Xi Jinping is.[30] Elon Musk is. The Saudis are.[31] Truth be told, my hunch is that those of the most serious nature will stay quiet about their ambitions until they have already secured victory. Suggesting otherwise is as nonsensical as someone in-the-know publicly speculating about atomic weapons in the early 1940s. Real players will hide their capabilities for as long as it benefits them. And yes, the global powers are already at war. It is known as 5th generation war or *Unrestricted Warfare*.[32] The number of casualties does not determine the seriousness of a conflict. If there will be casualties in the conventional sense, they will come all at once, and in the billions.

Since world domination is not within my capabilities or interests, I have not thought about it too much. If it was one's plan though, where should they start? Perhaps start by getting rich or get leverage over someone who has billions to spend. Next, acquire the tools of social technology to administrate your team of people and secure their loyalty. Maybe that team consists of AI researchers, bioengineers, farmers, and so forth. You would need to delegate a lot of responsibility to others in the pre-obsolescence age. Whatever the intermediary steps are, by the end you will have to be immunized against the threats posed by rival factions. You will also probably have to have your AI ready and the capability to construct a self-sufficient civilizational totality out of the world's ruins. To imagine doing this beyond the view of the watchful eyes of intelligence agencies is kind of ludicrous, but some ambitious people may try it. Any faction that attempts to do it without covert State backing will probably fail. As a practical example of a properly ambitious individual, one might want to emulate is Jeffrey Epstein. He was likely not an independent actor but an agent for CIA or Mossad. If you have any moral boundaries, you will not be part of the clique that gets to touch the ring of power. That is only the first requirement. There are millions out there ready to do anything it takes. Nothing short of a new secret society could compete with the present elite factions.

It must be said, that fighting for the control of technological civilization is simply not within the reach of most of us. Perhaps a humbler, and a more human existence, ought to be satisfactory.

Path of Formlessness

As clarified earlier, there are only a few viable paths to take for those who wish to survive this century and remain human. Our future is dominated by the inevitable clash between factions competing for global technological hegemony. There will be no space left for individual liberty within civilization as that will entail the democratization of WMDs and a counter-hegemonic threat. Besides the alternative of relentlessly participating in this conflict over technological hegemony or attempting to overthrow the technological civilization, one option is that of formlessness.

It might come off as counter-intuitive to think that the winning move could be found in conflict avoidance. Specifically in the Western and Masculine mind, inaction or retreat is synonymous with cowardice. That is not without a good reason: often, a retreat is only a road from bad to worse. However, all options must be considered. Especially when fighting titanic forces that are at the height of their power but give signs of being ready to collapse under their own weight. A lifetime of being rewarded for confrontation must be partially de-programmed for those who find excess discomfort in the idea of strategic retreat. And as I will lay it out, perhaps the boldest move is to dare to exit this technological civilization. It could very well be that it is a breakaway AI society and the primitive tribal people that will inherit this Earth.

For one to become formless, they must simply do two things: avoid interaction or direct conflict with the world system and become fully self-sufficient in all necessities of life. The former task of conflict avoidance is the easier one. Find a quiet spot in the domain of the least repressive judiciary system. Wherever you will be undisturbed by locals and authorities. Learn the laws and regulations. That latter task – that of self-sufficiency – is far more ambitious than one might at first think. It is at the very least, a project that requires lifetime investment and inter-generational work. I am in the process of cataloguing every skill and tool that is necessary for long-term survival and the list is getting long.

Primitive people have the luxury of being born into the lifestyle and they too rely on the aggregated knowledge of all their ancestral experience.

A useful heuristic is knowing that true self-sufficiency is close to indistinguishable from primitivism. Any technology that is beyond the stone age usually requires some form of division of labour between specialized settlements and should be confronted with skepticism. Only that which can be constructed from scratch (including the tools) is self-sufficient. Whether civilizational collapse occurs, or if it is a smooth ride towards technological singularity, self-sufficiency will be conducive for survival.

To take the option of a simple life as a legitimate alternative, the common misconceptions of low-tech life ought to be corrected. What has technology given us? Did it give us more leisure time? Make us happier? Healthier? The answer to all is a No. It did make us more powerful, which is the sole reason for its adoption. Medical technology is commonly cited as the definitive proof of the unquestionable goodness of technology. That seems like an undeniable truth until one remembers that almost all our illnesses are caused by the lifestyle that is imposed by technological civilization. Transmissive diseases are caused by population density. The only good caused by medical tech with a shred of legitimacy is the decrease in infant mortality. Even then, one might remember that historically people were simply accustomed to the idea that infant survival was a lottery and parents were not emotionally traumatized for life if a few babies did not make it further into childhood. Even the seemingly unquestionable goodness of a decrease in infant mortality was not a good without costs, for it has caused genetic unfitness. Genetic engineering or eugenics will have to fix that down the line.

The technology of agriculture is the bane of much of our problems. Conventional history is taught in a way to give people the idea that for the past ten thousand years, humans have transformed from brutish, unhappy animals into smarter and better beings. The stone age hunter-gatherers supposedly became farmers because they had simply been too stupid to invent it before and they were happy to take up the new lifestyle. This narrative is highly objectionable. Because the truth is: the agricultural life was a disaster for human beings. Nutritional deficiencies caused on average a 10cm shrinkage in human length that did not reverse until the 20th century.[33] Teeth increasingly decayed from the grainy diet and smaller jaws did not have room for wisdom teeth any longer. [34][35]

The social organization had to change and demanded humans to fit into a social organization they still have not properly adapted to. The small tribes of hunters where every individual was of unique cosmic importance were overtaken by systems where humans became dispensable cogs of inhumane machines. Instead of enjoying the pleasure of hunting, they had to become specialists and live boring monotonous lives. Life expectancy dropped, infant mortality increased, and many health issues such as diabetes, myopia, and cardiovascular disease started occurring. The brains of farmers got physically smaller which says enough about the “civilized farmer”. By all accounts, hunter-gatherers enjoyed a more fulfilled life than farmers.

The adoption of agriculture is a lesson in power. On a specific acreage, agriculture could feed many times more people and allowed people to breed faster. Despite being significantly weaker, unhealthier, and miserable compared to hunter-gatherers, farmers would dominate through sheer numbers. As was in this case, it is not always the happiest, the most fulfilled, the most enlightened, who wins. To understand the history and cause of civilization, it is truly critical to understand that primitive life was not abandoned out of a mere desire to get enlightened.

For sure, primitivism is not a magic ticket for eternal blissful existence. Primitive peoples have their troubles, internal squabbles and tribal warfare. Even if they manage to fly under the radar of civilization, they will be in existential competition with each other within a few generations as the carrying capacity of living space dwindles. There is no escape from the daily strife, from death and hardship – all that is hard must be embraced by the life-affirmative.

Systemic Collapse

The acknowledgment of human obsolescence relies on a big assumption: it assumes the world civilization can continue the process of technological advancement towards singularity without faltering under the pressures. History is not without examples of the pressures mounting too great for collapse to occur. Even resilient low-tech civilizations have reverted into more primitive states. The conventional history of continuous progress that is commonly taught does not give much priority to the topic of societal collapse. As events, they get relegated to footnotes and treated as insignificant setbacks on the longer timeline of inevitable progress. However, it is useful to know that history indeed has not been a linear success story and major setbacks in technological conditions did really happen. Knowledge of these events serves as tools for imagining the unimaginable: societal collapse.

Bronze Age Collapse of the Mediterranean civilizations is perhaps the most notable of these collapses. Some catalysts set forth the destructive raids of the unidentified Sea Peoples that ravaged the major civilizations of the Bronze Age such as the Egyptians, the Hittites, and the Mycenaeans. The true causes of the collapses are usually a mystery as the art of writing down events tended to fall into obscurity with the collapse of political structures. Some have proposed contributing factors such as disease, demographic change, climate change, war, and political disorder. Rapid changes in climates that led to crop failures and overpopulation seem to have coincided with many of the catastrophes. It has been established that collapses have happened and can happen.

The most famous contemporary Luddite and anti-industrialist Dr. Theodore J. Kaczynski (Unabomber) would probably make an argument that it is not enough to be self-sufficient, and the system cannot be relied upon to collapse fast enough. He would argue that the tentacles of civilization are already encroaching too much on individual liberty for a passive strategy of self-sufficiency to work and that the system's collapse must be actively aided. That argument does have some legitimacy. Anyone familiar with building codes, hunting regulations, and animal husbandry bureaucracy knows that 1st world countries are not exactly supportive of self-sufficiency. The threats looming in the future are that of increasing restrictions: for example, that it might become outright illegal to rely on wooden stoves for the heating of your home due to environmental regulations. What thinkers like Kaczynski fear the most though are the unknown threats like geoengineering mistakes. Mistakes that might make the planet uninhabitable. Not to forget all the future unacknowledged risks that have a similar scale for potential catastrophe. I do not support anti-system aggression nor violence, but I can vouch for reading the works of Kaczynski as an intellectual exercise to understand the philosophical outlook of active pro-collapsitarians. In particular the books Technological Slavery and Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How.

There are proponents of the idea that civilizational collapse is not only desirable but inevitable. Two concepts that make the core of this collapse fatalism are Peak Everything and self-propagating systems. Peak Everything is the observation that while the demands of energy, resources, and population are increasing, the world is running out of easily extractable resources. Resources like rare earth metals, oil, and fertilizers.[36][37][38] Resources do not have to be entirely depleted for them to become rare enough to have destabilizing effects. The only event that could shake the trajectory of Peak Everything is if something along the lines of controlled fusion energy reactors comes into existence. In short: something that resembles an artificial sun that can through nuclear transmutation create rare matter from abundant hydrogen. It is yet too early to say if fusion will ever be a thing and what exactly the obstacles for its realization are, but it is at least conceivable. However, Peak Everything is the end game for technological civilization if fusion magic does not enter the picture. Hypothetical solutions such as asteroid mining would only delay the inevitable.

Self-propagating systems is the idea that in the long-term, the robustness of the world-system will be subverted by the short-term profit-seeking by self-propagating sub-systems. This works through the principle of natural selection: systems that are considerate of the long-term future and do not favour reckless methods for growth are at a competitive disadvantage. Meanwhile, systems that prioritize short-term gains will out-compete the ones that do not. Within the various supersystems that compete for global hegemony, power tends to be achieved by those subsystems that prioritize the short-term. Formerly the largest self-propagating supersystems were limited in their scope due to communication and transportation technology, but in modern times the largest systems encompass all of Earth. This means that a failure in a critical point would risk every civilizational activity.

A common belief that needs to be examined is that the modern world could not irreversibly collapse without being built back soon. There are reasons to believe that it is not so. Those reasons are connectivity and available energy. Were the world-civilization subjected to an event that launched a chain reaction to total systemic collapse, it would likely be eternal as far as human timelines are concerned. Let us start with connectivity: never has everything been as interdependent on everything else to work. What that means is that every process rest upon the other parts working smoothly. For example, how much of society is reliant on the orderly functioning of agriculture, logistics and communication infrastructure? What would be the result if something were to happen to any of these, through natural catastrophe or malicious human intent? Be it a manufactured pandemic, a supervolcano eruption, or a world-wide cyberattack. If logistics and food delivery to stores would no longer work, cities would run out of food within a week. Everything that is economically efficient works with just-in-time logistics because that is profitable. If the downtime for the operations would go on for sufficiently long, they would not be able to restart.

Knowledge is stored in institutions, traditions, networks, and accumulated experience. One could not build a modern industrial furnace without the established history of successive generations of simpler furnaces. Merely possessing the blueprints for construction does not give one the ability to build it. The true complexity of the historical industrial revolution is seldom taught in any detail which is why we underestimate how complicated the task was. I recommend reading the chapter *The Synergetic Machine* from the book *Shoulders of Giants* by Gregory Rawlins if you are interested in a description of the necessary components for industrialization. For the industrial revolution to occur, it was necessary to have generations of highly specialized craftsmen and networks and a surplus of labour and resources. Even the earliest forms of ancient civilizations had established trade networks of essential items and networks of specialists.

It is also essential to understand that all sources of easily extractable energy have been used up. For an industrial revolution to occur, there needs to not only be an extensive social organization of specialists in place but also easily available energy resources. In practice, that would be coal and oil. For the past 200 years, all the easily accessible reserves have been used up. What remains are either small, uneconomic reserves or hard to access ones, that require high-tech infrastructure in place to access in the first place. Because of these factors, it is reasonable to think that were a collapse to occur, it would be a permanent throwback to pre-industrial times.

The remainder of the book will resume with the assumption that you have not chosen to wield the tools of power and contest for global technological hegemony. The following chapters will be written for You who sees self-sufficiency as the future.

III.

WILDERNESS OPTION

DEEP SELF-SUFFICIENCY
SUBSISTENCE STRATEGY
CARTOGRAPHY OF EURASIA
SEALED COMMUNITY
DWELLING CONSTRUCTION
TRIBAL CONFEDERACY

Deep Self-Sufficiency

All that has been written on self-sufficiency so far has been shallow. The lazy assumption of doomsday preppers is to assume the collapse to be temporary and that mere hoarding of supplies will get one through it. As explained in Systemic Collapse, a proper collapse would probably last indefinitely. None of the preppers have dared to ask: what would genuine self-sufficiency look like? Which could be defined as a system of existence that can sustain itself hermetically for ten thousand years without requiring external input. All manuals so far take it for granted that we have easy access to tools, equipment, and so forth – what if you truly had to live off-grid for generations and not be critically dependent on outside manufacturing? This chapter assumes familiarity with the basics of self-sufficiency. This is not a guide but hopefully will make many rethinks the common pitfalls.

One of the first traps people fall into when planning for self-sufficiency is adopting tools and techniques that are seemingly contributing to self-sufficiency but in truth only give temporary aid in off-grid living. Solar panels are a perfect exhibit of these types of equipment. It is associated with the common meaning of self-sufficiency but in reality, its usefulness is highly exaggerated. Having one's essential activities such as the food preservation method rely on a combination of solar panels and a fridge will spell doom when a critical component within the chain fails. That will happen eventually as with all mechanical things. Solar panels can be estimated to be useful for thirty years. The key with any off-grid technology use is to make sure it is treated purely as a luxury.

Another example of false self-sufficiency is greenhouses. Greenhouses can extend the living range of vegetables. While they may seem like an attractive option, being reliant on them is a bad idea on closer inspection. While glass is resistant to degradation, it is not resistant to damage. Wherever you are you will have storms once in a century that will pummel your greenhouses to pieces. Accidents can happen too. Glass is neither reproducible as a strategy for the next generations as there is no primitive way of producing glass. If you cannot make something yourself from scratch, it is not self-sufficiency. Equipment like solar power and greenhouses give a false sense of security which will inevitably lead to poor planning and negligent implementation of more durable alternatives.

High-tech on-grid technology is not necessarily bad. We were thrown into this world without the gift of tradition and may need crutches to figure stuff out within our lifetime. Computers are fantastic tools for research and communication. So long we live in a society we also must comply with the rules and regulations that the system imposes on us if we want to fly under the radar. Equipment like the chainsaw is reliant on spare parts and gasoline to function but time is of the essence. Recreating techniques of the past for sentimental authenticity is a fool's game. It is better to spare the handsaws for times when chainsaws can no longer be equipped. The wilderness option is not an escape from the intra-human competition. Competition is eternal and if we practice inefficient techniques our grandchildren will bear the cost once they meet tribes that did not.

The issue with partial self-sufficiency is that all the work done might turn out to be redundant if it is not started with holistic all-encompassing planning. For example, someone tricked into partial self-sufficiency might buy a yard that is too small or inappropriately located. They might invest a decade of work into building a food garden only to discover they do not have the acreage for full self-sufficiency. Or they might not have the space for a blacksmith's furnace, something they never considered to be of essential value since they thought they could just start somewhere and eventually progress into full self-sufficiency within time. Or their geographical location is terrible which nullifies all efforts in self-sufficiency.

To become truly self-sufficient, one needs to be fully aware of all the things they need before they commit to buying tools or property. Only tools that can be made from scratch are truly self-sufficient. If something is not explicitly primitive or stone-age, it should be regarded with the highest suspicion. Many "low-tech solutions" are not antifragile enough for self-sufficiency because they often still require some civilizational organization. For example, canning for food preservation is old-fashioned but still requires a level of technology that is not obtainable for small self-sufficient communities.

While discouraging against the excess reliance on hoarding, it is to be acknowledged that hoarding does serve a purpose for the self-sufficient. As the truth is that even a total systemic collapse will not make physical objects disappear into thin air. People who are gun owners will still own guns post-collapse. Ammunition and guns will stay good for decades at a minimum, maybe up to a century. So, it might be a good idea to pick up hunting as a hobby. Bow and arrow can be good enough if the circumstances do not allow you to own a gun, although a gun would always be preferable if possible. Besides obviously having a longer range, guns also do not break as easily. Other things that might be good to hoard are stuff like fire-starting equipment and workable metals.

Many of the useful machines of the modern homestead run on petroleum products. How about hoarding oil, gasoline, and diesel in titanic containers? Unfortunately, this is an unviable option. Oxidation, microbes, and water will make the fuel turn bad within a few years even when optimally stored. There are however alternatives to petroleum-based fuels. One of these is wood gas. Wood gas converted tractors were widely used during the fuel shortages of the second world war. The advantage of wood gas is that wood is a renewable cheap resource. The bottleneck comes from the mechanical integrity of the wood gas setup. Like all mechanical systems though, it is bound to break with time, and you cannot repair it by yourself. All it takes is for one small part for the gasifier to break, and you are out of power. You would need to get familiar with the function of every nut and bolt and somehow remain confident in your ability to scavenge awfully specific spare parts after the supply chain collapse. At the end of the day, if you need strength to plough fields or pull logs from the forest there is no substitute for the horse or the ox. Living animals get sick and die too but at least they are not irreplaceable as they can produce offspring.

One should utilize modern technology in the short term even when they have a contingency plan for the inter-generational period. For example, if you were to build a log cabin, it would be simply stupid not to use a chainsaw versus a handsaw. Any concerns about authenticity is live-action roleplay.

Raiders will be a major source of headaches. An inadequately discussed topic in survivalist or prepper-adjacent communities is the existence of other people. In these circles, everyone plans like a general who fails to consider that someone might have opposite interests. This manifests in the countless preppers who live in suburban communities and maybe enjoy some limited form of self-sufficiency through backyard farming. What they fail to plan for is that their nice neighbour family will not stay nice for long if things go south. It will take less than a few days for a hungry neighbour to realize that to feed his hungry kids, he will have to take his neighbour's chicken. Rural preppers are not much better off.

While modern farms have a massive output in food production, this will not be the case if supply chains are severely disrupted. Modern farms are just as reliant on fertilizers and electricity as any other industrial process. Tractors and other heavy equipment will not run if oil transportation is permanently disrupted. Few modern farmers have the means to spontaneously go back to 18th century horse-powered farming – they do not have the horses, not the seeds, not the equipment. If they have livestock, they are likely dependent on supply chains for their feed too. Some lucky farmers might be the rare exception and are able to run their operations without external input – but they will be faced with the problem of neighbours too. For every self-sufficient farmer, you will have a thousand hungry people desperate to feed themselves. At the end of the day, you can only really trust other self-sufficient people to not be a danger to you.

In the event of a collapse, millions of people can be expected to flee the cities in search of water and food. That is the worst-case scenario at least and that is what one should plan for. They will presumably be armed to some degree and be extremely hostile if they are on the verge of starvation. While you might survive encounters against the more dimwitted robbers, it is unrealistic to expect to survive many waves of them. The passive defender of a physical location is at a disadvantage when it comes to ambushes unless extreme preparations are done. Conflict avoidance during stormy times will be key to survival.

Many homesteaders try to make a profit by entering the organic markets. This is a risky venture that might backfire. Making a business out of organic farming requires a ton of marketing and reputation building which will in the post-collapse period translate into receiving thousands of former customers and their families trying to take security within your farm. Anyone who knows you are a homesteader is someone who will want security from you. It would be wise to only let those know about our self-sufficiency who we can afford to protect. Lifeboats have a maximum capacity and you cannot protect everyone.

Subsistence Strategy

When planning for self-sufficiency, the primary concern becomes nutrition. There's a couple of different ways for humans to feed themselves, all with different benefits and drawbacks. Let us explore them.

The most archaic way of seeking nutrition as humans is a combination of hunting and foraging. It tends to impose a nomadic lifestyle upon its practitioners due to the scarcity of game animals. Foraging is usually done only to supplement the practice of hunting and there is no caloric viability in foraging by itself. Hunting is somewhat of an uncertain endeavour but is still surprisingly manageable in food security. However, in the context of civilization, hunting-gathering is probably the worst alternative for those who strive for true self-sufficiency. The stringent parameters set by landownership, the judiciary system, hunting regulations, and so forth, doom the possibility of sustaining life on hunting and foraging. In no place on Earth can you be a true hunter-gatherer any longer, outside the most isolated jungles of Amazon. The second issue with hunting-gathering is population density. If there was a proper collapse, all game animals would swiftly face their extinction from the hands of hungry people and the forests outside of the most inaccessible wilderness would be barren within a month. Hunting and gathering are best fit to supplement another strategy – but they should not be a primary method to rely on.

Out of all the patterns of subsistence, the practice of fishing is perhaps the most energy-efficient source of reliable nutrition. Alongside hunting, it is healthy in contrast to pure agricultural diets that guarantee malnourishment. However, as with hunting, fishing has its problems and is best suited to be merely supplemental to another lifestyle. The issue with fish is that they are particularly sensitive to environmental damage. In the event of a collapse, it should be estimated that many industrial systems without maintenance will fail and leak out toxins in rivers and the air, that comes down with rain. Pollution of water is not always visible to the naked eye which makes fishing a risky business.

Soil degradation is one of the symptoms of modern industrial agriculture. The practices of overgrazing, monoculture, row cropping, intensive tilling, pesticides, et cetera have done almost irreversible damage to wild nature.[39] Few care about its impact on biodiversity or water quality, but everyone should be rightfully concerned about the effects of soil degradation on crop yield. A rising world population combined with reduced yield is a recipe for disaster. Unless techno-science manages to find a solution at the last minute for the global drop in soil quality, the consequence will be famine.

Traditional agriculture is not only environmentally unsustainable, but it is certain to give undernourishment. A more attractive option for subsistence is the modified agricultural practice of permaculture. In short, permaculture is a style of farming that will secure a more sustainable crop. The advantage of this system of subsistence is that it is stealthy and highly defensible. A proper permaculture yard will look like undifferentiated vegetation to an untrained eye due to the irregular planting pattern. Permaculture is best paired with animal husbandry for a complete diet. According to ecologist Dr. Wendy Taheri, some enhanced crop variants have been bred with such a single-minded focus on the yield that they are unable to form synergic networks with the fungus in the soil. Assuming this is true, it is yet another reason to favour heritage breeds over modern variants.

The practice of nomadically herding animals is perhaps the most satisfying pattern of subsistence besides hunting. It is less work, and the prize is delicious meat. The chief problem with pastoralism becomes the defence of the herd. In the event of a collapse, hungry people are mostly not going to wither away in their apartments but take out to the countryside and woods. Desperate people that turn into raiding will be the foremost enemy of any pastoralist. Hidden underground bunker for the herd to protect from raiders? Creative times will require creative solutions. Only the prepared will be blessed.

Besides agriculture, a dominating subsistence strategy since the decline in hunting-gathering has been animal husbandry. Domestication might have occurred because hunter-gatherers overpopulated an area and animal herds had to be protected to guarantee the meat supply. Traditionally, peoples were less limited by political borders which made the practice of nomadic pastoralism the standard lifestyle of tribes accompanying animals. Grazing animals do not prefer to overgraze areas and always keep on moving to the fresh grounds unless restricted by barriers. While an animal species can survive beyond its optimal climate range, a pastoral tribe with a different more optimized species of animal will likely dominate the area. Environment-optimized species can more efficiently harvest the ecology for nutrition, which will allow for larger herds which will make stronger tribes. Animals are not only valuable for their meat but their fat, skin, manure, and labour. There is great variation within breeds and as a rule of thumb, more ancient breeds are hardier while giving a smaller economic return. Breeds perfected for factory farming conditions obviously will not be perfect in other settings. The question to ask is, what will be the most successful animals in the post-speciation/collapse age?

Goats and sheep are staple domesticated animals, characteristic of hardier climates such as dry, mountainous regions. Especially around the arid Mediterranean and Middle East have they been popular. Goats are more undemanding of where they browse, and they will endure almost anywhere but they are harder to herd. Due to their discriminatory eating habit and skill at escaping enclosures, goats do not fit well together with food gardens. Sheep are easier to herd and have the added benefit of being wool factories.

The conquerors of the Eurasian Steppes have historically been pastoralists with horses and cattle. Horse-riding tribes such as the Huns, Mongols, and Scythians, were wildly successful in subjugating agricultural empires and becoming the elites of the conquered societies. For lactose tolerant people, cattle have the additional benefit of efficiently transforming grass into dairy products. Even lactose-intolerant people like the Mongols can utilize milk by making it into low-lactose products such as yogurts and cheese. The most recent wild ancestor of cattle, aurochs, lived as far North as Estonia.[40] A problem with both horses and cattle is their size and the open space of their pastures. Even if one were to survive the hot period of collapse, guns will exist for at least a century after post-collapse. Steppes have a long range of sight and herds of cattle and horses are perhaps the hardest thing to keep hidden from others. An advantage of big animals is their capacity for self-defence against wild predators.

Small animals like rabbits, chickens, and ducks are especially efficient in transforming ecology into human nutrition. They are a popular alternative for people with limited acreage due to their efficiency. For every kilogram of eggs and meat, they require little grazing area. The main problem with birds and rabbits is keeping out predators such as fox, wolves, hawks, and raccoons. Even with modern fencing, it is hard to protect a large area from predator attacks. Modern chicken farming is made significantly easier by the availability of convenient enclosures such as chicken wire. No material is safe from degradation however and by the second self-sufficient human generation, the question of the enclosure will pose a problem. Replicating chicken wire or wooden enclosures through primitive methods is not easy. If one were to become a poultry pastoralist, it would necessitate the watchful presence of several large guard dogs to fend of unwanted visitors. As for rabbits and chicken, their meat is lean – even too lean and that makes it a problem for human nutrition. They are only suitable as a complementary food source because they lack the necessary fats. In the modern world, we undervalue fats and take them for granted but in self-sufficient settings, fat is more valuable than meat. That is why creatures like the cow and domestic pigs are especially valuable for the fat they contain.

Pigs are smart and tough which is why wild boars have become a menace both in rural Europe and the USA. Pigs may even independently find their way to the woods and forage their food. They require little herding as they can return home by themselves. Like any animal, they too do require protection and care. The last note for chicken: ever heard about chicken pastoralists? Me neither. There might be more issues besides the problem with enclosures. That is only the most obvious problem.

Selection of breed is a matter one should put considerable attention into. For non-civilizational peoples, the strength of the herd is near synonymous with the strength of the tribe. The modern agricultural practice has through selective breeding and genetic modification made breeds that are maximally economically efficient. They grow big and do it fast. They tend to however be less nutritious and less hardy. Hardiness is a primary concern for someone who wants to keep producing a stable output outside of the tight parameters of maximized efficiency. So, please consider favouring heritage seeds and heritage breeds in general.

There is no single superior alternative of animal species for a prospective pastoralist. They all have their unique pros and cons. My personal bias is in favour of cattle. This is perhaps because cattle are the time-tested gold standard of Eurasian peoples. There is often tedious paperwork involved with keeping larger animals due to animal welfare laws which is why most aspiring for self-sufficiency start with smaller animals like chickens. Everything else considered chicken will probably be the go-to option for most because of this. There is additionally a huge variety of more exotic animals that might be worthwhile to investigate. Yaks, llamas, camels, bison. Most of these are bred for a certain ecology and might be superior in their particular climate. Reindeer are a viable alternative for the subarctic for example. Reindeer do not do well in small enclosures however and prefer large areas to roam on.

When it comes to subsistence strategy experimentation should be avoided. What might be convenient now might not be that any longer when the settings are changed. Most of the historical pastoralists can be regarded as having perfected their trade. Both in breed selection and working styles.

Cartography of Eurasia

Location is a question of central importance on both the large and small scale. On the continental, country, provincial and municipal level. Let us start by saying that you want to either be in continental Eurasia or the Americas. Africa, Australia, or the islands of the world are only habitable in a small part and in the long-term sub-ideal. Climate change might make them increasingly uninhabitable. The planet is currently in an interglacial period and the next glaciation could start whenever.[41] Large continents mean more space which gives options for mobility. Once the choice for either Eurasia or America has been made, the next selection happens at the country level. The four litmus tests for a habitable location are:

1. Climate for homesteading
2. Legality of homeschooling
3. Gun regulation
4. Population density

On the American continents, the litmus tests on a national level are passed by Chile, Canada, and the United States. Regional variation is obviously massive in the latter two. States like Idaho, Texas and Missouri are the most ideal by the legal metrics and not bad when it comes to population density and climate. Other good states are the likes of Michigan and

Montana. The US in general is one of the best countries when it comes to independence, and one could make it almost anywhere there if they so desired. The US has the added benefit of having a population that is fiercely skeptical of authorities which is ultimately the only backstop against encroaching tyranny. It is to be expected that many countries around the world will try to curb homeschooling and gun ownership and to have a strong culture is vital for buying more time. Next to the United States is Canada, which on paper is not much worse. Canada is only outdone by Russia when it comes to habitable empty space. The major drawback Canada has is the lack of cultural thirst for independence. Were the political forces interested in stricter regulation of homeschooling or gun ownership, it is hard to envision a successful opposition to it.

Within Europe, the four countries that pass all the litmus tests are Austria, Finland, Serbia, and Russia. They all have additional pros and cons but those are mostly of subjective taste and importance. As a rule of thumb, poorer countries have less atomized culture and therefore are more clannish. This is a bad thing for a foreigner unless you manage to marry into the local culture. Which might not be an obvious thing to consider for many 1st world urbanites. If one were to acquire property in rural Serbia or Russia, it would be best to ask around in the village if they are wanted there in the first place. Nothing will spell disaster for self-sufficiency as bad as hostile neighbours. While not as important, the practice of scouting for the social atmosphere is also essential in the more developed countries like Finland or Austria. For the acquirement of property, it is good to consider that the phenomenon of recent urbanization has made rural property quite cheap in some parts of Europe. Old, small farms with decent structures are abandoned for mere pennies because of their remote location.

A chief concern among the self-sufficient is latitude. Latitude determines the amount of yearly sunlight which controls the growth of flora and fauna. The dilemma is between habitability and population density: places that are easy to grow crops in, tend to be densely populated. If someone bothered to give mathematical values for climate suitability and population density to find the perfect habitable spots on Earth it would probably be somewhere in Siberia or Russian Far East. Since high population density is a non-negotiable problem, the only viable solution for the aspiring self-sufficient is to choose a sub-ideal location from the agricultural point of view. Having the perfect climate for food growth is however not necessary. Climate is crucial if you must be economically competitive with the production of warmer climates. Self-sufficient people who see intrinsic value in their crops and herds do not have to care about economic viability as much. There are small cattle farms as far north as Lapland – farming can be done almost anywhere.

Winter feed is the thing that requires more attention in the colder regions. Year-around cattle pastoralism with no agriculturally produced hay may be limited along the lines of the historical range of aurochs: Estonia and south of that. In addition to the downsides, there are benefits to colder climates. Food preservation which is a true problem for primitive people is way easier done in the cold. The great outdoors becomes a big freezer and meat will not spoil the same way it does in hotter areas. Some diseases also do not flourish in the cold as they do in hotter areas.

Climate change is a real thing and it has always occurred. Fluctuation between cold and warm periods occur during centuries and have an impact on agricultural output. If we are located at the very edge of a habitable region, that region may turn uninhabitable within the next century. Likewise, many presently uninhabitable areas will become habitable. Besides the smaller variation between warm and cold periods, there is the glaciation that will follow our present interglacial period. It appears cyclical. We are overdue for another glaciation within the coming centuries if the grand cycles keep consistent with historical data.

Political collapse is a process that tends to happen gradually over decades. However, there might be tipping point events that will eventually transform mere political disintegration into proper collapse. Even basic infrastructure will go irreparably down, and supply chains will not deliver basic necessities to populations. Once trust in societal continuation has eroded, the phase defined by looting and struggle will commence. This is the hot period. It is the most dangerous one and especially preppers with supplies will be targeted. While preparing for self-sufficiency, one should not forgo planning for lawlessness because it will be one of the greatest obstacles. It is to be expected that a large portion of both the urban and rural population gets on the move and neighbours will turn against one another. Practical concerns will numerous. Major ones being the concealment of livestock and keeping a watch around the clock. It is a pure delusion to think that anyone could survive several ambushes alive. It is of foremost significance to choose a location to avoid encounters. The hot period will however not last indefinitely and will instead gradually fizzle down as starvation collects the unprepared.

With the breakdown of law, your stuff can be appropriated, and you can hypothetically appropriate the materials of others. Judicial ownership of land and objects will not matter. You only own what you can defend, and you can take what is left defenceless. Something to consider for example is that buying up woodland areas in excess will serve little practical purpose as there likely will not be anyone to contest you from appropriating lumber for your own use in a world of disorder. Related to this, it is good to know that even in our normal times' much value can be appropriated for free from others. Dry branches can be gathered from the woods for firewood and people will give you leaf piles for composting for free if you ask them.

An often-overlooked factor among preppers is not considering the relationship between location and ambush susceptibility. One must make mental exercises and imagine the psychology of ill-prepared normal people. Those who get on the move to fight starvation, where will they head? Towards the countryside. Any livestock they find will be butchered. One’s home should not locate close next to a lake in areas where lakes are sparse. Lakes will be human magnets when water shortages become relevant. With this in mind, it should be preferred to be in an area with an abundance of lakes. That will spread people out and make it so that not everyone will rush to your nearby lake. How your home is situated in relation to the highways is probably the most important question of location, however. On their way out of the towns, people will naturally take to the highways first. Any farms besides the highways have zero chance of not having their livestock targeted. Therefore, one should be located as many degrees of separation from major highways as possible. This will diminish the statistical chance of anyone finding your homestead by pure chance. For maximum security, it is best to be located deep in a forest and not be directly linked to a main road. Additionally, maps showcasing the location of electricity infrastructure might be of interest unless you plan on autonomous off-grid electricity production.

Collapsing nuclear and industrial plants will be a local hazard and depending on the weather, a threat that can extend its effect quite far. Do not source your drinking water downstream of potential hazards. Nearby tectonic or volcanic activity can pose a rare but devastating danger. An area and its novel problems should be understood in detail before committing to an area. Last and foremost, the greatest hazard is to be afraid of movement. One must have the courage to pack one's gear and move when irreconcilable problems surface. Sentimental ideas like "homeland" cannot obstruct one from the action when one must do what has to be done. No permanently stationary people have survived in human history.

Sealed Community

Self-sufficiency does not mean one has to be a hermit and isolate oneself alone. Quite the opposite. The theoretically smallest self-sufficient unit is a family of a male and female that are of reproductive age. In truth, the unit of a family is too small, and a real community of several families is needed for the self-propagating sustainable community. Even for the least social of us, the social benefits of a community should be obvious. It is nice to have company! Additionally, genetic diversity in the case of a bottleneck event will not be harmful. I will focus on the substantive practical benefits that come from the community when compared to survival alone which is not a real alternative. It must be reminded that the distinction between partial self-sufficiency and true self-sufficiency is that only the latter is truly operable outside civilization aid – which will be invaluable if either collapse or speciation occurs as should happen with enough time. The size of a self-sufficient community should be limited in size. Not larger than a few families. Internal factionalism and outside attention grow the larger the community becomes. What is critical for every member of the community to understand is that to be biovirus proof, none of them can have physical contact with the outside world. A proper quarantine means that not even packages can enter inside the community without going through quarantine and cleaning. No guests, even with quarantine. Internet use is okay however and should be utilized for the purposes of learning and socialization.

There are reasons besides the threat of biovirus to prefer isolation instead of participation in civilization. One of them is that we are living in a world of potential toxicity. Every day we interact with hundreds of substances whose effects we have no long-term knowledge of. Building materials, paints, cookware, foods, additives, deodorants, plastics, birth control in the water supply, hair dyes, and vaccines. These are only the obvious ones we can speculate about. The full list is endless. How about the thousands of chemicals that go under the radar? The declining fertility of men is perhaps the best showcase of this world of toxicity. When we do not know exactly what causes infertility, the only safe route is to blanket ban everything modern as much as possible.

The capital incentive is to innovate and give products to the market irrespective of their long-term damaging potential. Products are mostly only pulled from the markets if they can be demonstrated to have conclusive, short-term damage. To categorize something as non-toxic with definitive certainty one would have to model every molecular interaction and the aggregate effect of all the various substances that we ingest into the human body. Presently, that would be far too burdensome. Materials and substances that have been around the longest are the most trustworthy and they are the low-tech options such as stone, lumber, bone, and common metals. In all the ways that the modern world has poisoned us, I wish the consequences to stay with us only and not impact the progeny inter-generationally.

There are several other benefits of having a community. Easier big game hunting with non-modern means is one of them which is coincidentally the reason big game hunting to this day is a team effort. With big game hunting comes the sharing of rapidly spoiling game meat. Elks and deer have more meat than one family can eat before spoiling. The active lifestyle of self-sufficiency prevents many illnesses from forming, but it also sometimes leads to temporary injuries that take time to heal. Assistance in sustenance in times of sickness or injury was already a practice in the stone age among the Neanderthal.[42] Additionally, community is helpful for problem-solving, and the internal competition will foster inventiveness.

How about the necessary interactions with the system such as state bureaucracy or homeschooling inspectors? Luckily, most paperwork today can already be carried out online and surely increasingly so in the future. What about the rare exceptions? The optimal solution is obviously to either authorize a friend outside the community to carry out the task or wear a Hazmat suit if the work cannot be delegated. Treat everything civilizational as contaminated. Even the mail that drops in the mailbox. It must be kept in mind that physical isolation is a double-edged sword: it will weaken people against the common viruses. The risk of bio- and nanoweapons are however more urgent, from the viewpoint of this century.

As far as money is concerned, the first step is leeching off the social system and applying for all the aid programs one's family is eligible for. There is no virtue in supporting an unsustainable industrial society. In the meanwhile, it might still be worthwhile to lay the groundwork for a monetary income stream. Money is still needed in some quantities as bills, luxuries, taxes, and assorted crutches need to be paid for during the years before and after true self-sufficiency is achieved. What fields are open to a full-time isolationist? Presently, the fields are few and usually require entrepreneurship. Some career paths are the likes of programming, e-coaching, writing, art, and selling crafted handmade objects. Much can be done through nothing but mail and the internet today and in the future surely even more. Vitally, one's level of comfort must be adjusted to fit lower income levels or even no income at all.

During the first generation, the community members will likely have to engage in specialization due to time constraints. Mastery over the more complicated skills is a lifetime of effort. The most immediately necessary skills are ones that give warmth, nutrition, and tools, and should be mastered by all. The specific region and sustenance strategy will obviously determine what these in practice are. Irrespective of everything, the big three skills are metalworking, woodworking, and leatherworking. Independent metalworking is critical for a self-sufficient community that wants to get beyond the paleolithic tools of stone, tree and bone. Metalworking is mostly for crafting and repairing mundane tools such as knives and axes. Further down the road comes the problem of sourcing and mining for ore – simply hoarding will probably suffice for the first thousand years. Historically, metal users have defeated stone users which suggests it is not a good idea to stay with stone tools. Even if you can be self-sufficient with stone tools in a vacuum, your children must also survive the inevitable conflict with metal users.

Here is an incomplete list of some of the critical skills that every self-sufficient community must master to truly be what it claims. It is a lot of skills for one person of modernity to adopt! These should only give the vague idea of what a herculean task true self-sufficiency is - and why you are going to need others. Every major skill contains endless amounts of sub-skills and these all cannot be mastered by one person.

1. Sustenance Strategy
Pastoralism / Hunting / Gardening / Gathering
Processing / Butchering / Smoking / Drying / Salting
2. Woodworking
Forestry / Carpentry
Bows / Arrows / Traps / Spears
Boats / Wagons / Skis / Sleds
3. Metalworking
Ore sourcing / Mining
Knives / Axes / Hammers / Adze
Scythe / Hoe / Plough / Shovel
4. Leatherworking
Skinning / Tanning
Shoemaking / Tailoring
5. Tools & Knowledge
Pottery / Vessels / Buckets
Ovens / Foundations / Bridges
Ropes / Cord / Nets
Candles / Torches / Gluemaking
Sharpening stone / Wood tar
Physician / Veterinary / Midwifery
Sauna / Soap / Alcohol / Vinegar

Training / Strategy
Timekeeping / Navigation
Animals / Plants

Dwelling Construction

The question of habitation is one of the primary concerns for a self-sufficient community. Building regulations and increasingly strict energy efficiency demands are making it harder to achieve a low-tech lifestyle. It is not impossible however and there are many ways around that. One of the main techniques to bypass the efficiency regulation is to buy old property and renovating instead of building new. Another trick is making residency in sheds registered for other activities. Mobile homes are acceptable as stationary homes, but their mobility is dependent on the grid which makes them a sub-ideal for off-grid desires. An underappreciated alternative type of residency are large tents or yurts. Well-built yurts such as the traditional ones by the Mongolians will keep warm even in the coldest climates that continental Eurasia has to offer.

Some may choose to disregard society's rules completely and get away with it. Mike Oehler has showcased this alternative in his book The Fifty Dollar and Up Underground House. If someone wants to truly be off grid, it is possible to pick a secluded spot and dig a dwelling underground. Dugout homes were the standard for many areas for a large part of human history. While this alternative should not be anyone's primary alternative, it is useful to be kept in the mental toolbox. Events might always go worse than imagined. The main concern with underground structures comes in the form of sensing technology such as LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging). With these types of tools, underground structures might be revealed by the earth-level surface abnormalities that they create. Presently, these sensing technologies are not powerful enough to penetrate Earth layers from the sky. The technological developments in this field must be monitored.

To have a community, one does not have to and preferably would not live in the same compound as non-related families. Whatever benefit such a living arrangement might have is vastly outweighed by the downsides. Historical attempts of communes have made this abundantly clear: communes simply do not last. Excess proximity is the main factor. Unless bound together by immediate hardships, fights over things like behaviour and workloads will inevitably happen between people in communes. Another major downside with communal life is that it attracts outsider attention which can turn ugly as the fate of Waco Branch Davidians revealed. Outsiders do not trust communes because it is what cults do and cults are creepy. Traditional village structure with houses separated is the time-tested gold standard for community life.

Infrastructural solutions might be necessary to deal with the threat that raiders pose on livestock. Agricultural crops are easier to hide from common view by following permaculture - planting uncommon crops in random patterns. Bigger livestock or animals that make noise are harder to hide and they are the primary target for anyone who would intrude upon your property. A contingency plan is necessary. One alternative might be something along the lines of an underground bunker. It does not have to be a solid structure - just a foliage-covered trench big enough to temporarily house livestock for the required time. Another option is to camouflage the permanent barn structures. Especially in hilly areas, this is easier to do against hillsides where the barns could be constructed as natural extensions of the hills. In more plain areas this is harder to do, but still doable. It only requires more effort to keep the silhouettes irregular and seemingly natural.

With habitation comes the question of defence. He who takes the possibility of collapse seriously will want to be prepared adequately for negative confrontations. Those who prefer to "figure it out along the way" will be utterly ambushed if the hypothesized bad times do occur. Defenders of any property have only one advantage and that is preparation. For a defender to gain leverage in an interaction he needs to funnel activity into monitorable chokepoints. These should be inconspicuous and not obvious to the outside eye. Natural barriers that would not be recognized as barriers work the best. Water obstacles such as lakes, ponds, bogs are most efficient at obstructing movement. Steep hills, thorny hedgerows, and particularly dense foliage can be almost impenetrable. Especially if they are combined. Defence constructions should be done to utilize the means of the local geography. Underground passageways? Trapping pits at chokepoints? Nothing is excessive and creative measures will be unexpected. When entering the Hot period, watch should be kept around the clock and 360 degrees around the defendable area. A basic non-electronic communication system can be anything as simple as wire attached to bells. Radio equipment might be useful, but not necessary. Night vision can be a worthwhile investment if accompanied by light sources. Night vision is useless in a total absence of light, but a single smouldering cigarette will light up a large area. Thermal vision is superior to night vision but is quite unaffordable and not worth the investment. Regular binoculars are an affordable must-have for the daytime environment.

Tribal Confederacy

A major part of self-isolation is that it necessitates homeschooling. For most modern people this is an outlandish idea. When compared to the historical baseline though it is modern education that deviates from the normal. Only for a few generations have all children been taught outside of the home. And the truth is, the longer one considers homeschooling as an option the more apparent its viability becomes. Most opposition to homeschooling comes from misconceptions such as that it socially alienates children from others, that the education is worse and that it requires insane levels of effort from the parents. All of it is untrue. Homeschooling has been internationally studied and universally the results are clear: homeschooled kids do become socially well-adjusted,[43] their school performance is on average better,[44] and they spend way less time doing schoolwork compared to their peers.[45] All of it makes sense when you consider why. The main advantage of homeschooling comes from flexibility and customization. All children are unique and benefit greatly from personalized teaching instead of standardized curriculums. What takes kids eight hours to do at school, they are generally able to do in a couple of hours at home. And they can do it semi-independently after a certain age. Perhaps the greatest advantage of homeschooling though is that it prevents excess ideological indoctrination by the education system. Children should not be completely sheltered from toxic ideas though because in small doses it helps them to build their mental immune system. However, having them endure endless State-enforced propaganda is excessive and cruel.

Looking beyond the immediate survival of the kin: the self-sufficient community will eventually meet the ecological carrying capacity. In practice, this has always meant "migration" or conquest by the overpopulated areas into foreign areas. Singular tribes are not able to field enough men in these conditions which is why local tribes have always grouped up to form confederacies. From this, we get the age-old dilemma of power concentration: how much should we cooperate and trust the alliance to protect the interests of our tribe? There is this paradox between selfishness and cooperation that cooperation sometimes is the best option for one's self-interest. As long as you can trust the others and the trust is merited. After securing our basic needs of self-sufficiency, the most vital technology is that of social organization. Tribal confederacies that can construct the most powerful alliances will have to make use of rituals, festivals, trade, language, marriages, and stories to bond. Communication technology will be essential for social bonding - the speed with which information travels creates proximity. The Inca Empire in South America was held together by a communication system of ultrarunners that would deliver messages by foot.[46] In Eurasia, boats and horses have been used wherever applicable.

As said, it is not enough to merely survive. One must endure in the competition against others and perfect the social organization to create the necessary conditions. We are fortunate enough to be born into a time where we can study historical mistakes and similarly take note of historical strategies that worked out for populations. We are also able to study events that are rare and hard to prepare against. Here are some lessons from past ages:

I. Head south, once the great rock falls on earth or black dust dims the daytime sky. Head south if the weather cools. Take to the highest mountain when the water level rises beyond the memory of elders.

II. Make games of artificial hardship when life turns too easy. Life cannot last without sacrifice and struggle.

III. There is purpose in Tradition beyond your understanding. Do not be afraid to burn down the lawbooks if the customs of ancients weigh you down.

IV. Love your own children above all else but keep eyes on talent in children not your own. Respect your elders but privilege the fresh blood that has not yet blossomed. Privilege love in marriage over alliance, for you will degenerate in spirit and beauty if you marry for power only.

V. Be not dazed by the new techniques of foreign peoples.

VI. The hunter and herder will prevail over the seed planter.

VII. A reputation of honour and loyalty carries far. It is dangerous to be betrayed, but you must trust others to survive.

VIII. Propagate the breeds that have the traits you need.

IX. Do not enslave the conquered people. They will assimilate you.

X. Love the fate that you encounter. You are never alone and never without hope.

IV.

CLEARER VISION OF THE PRESENT

FORESIGHT
BLEEDING HEART ELITES
BLACKMAIL NETWORKS
RITUAL OF LIFE-AFFIRMATION

Foresight

This last chapter is dedicated for additional rumination on establishing a clearer view of the present age. The first part is concerned with the general topic of predictions, the elites and their networks of control. These are necessary topics for understanding technological determinism. Lastly, this chapter will cover the necessary psychological self-conditioning one has to go through to hold unconventional ideas despite the total lack of social proof. Embracing wildly unorthodox ideas does not come easy for most sane people.

Anyone who has tried their luck in predicting things knows how hard it is. Even when you get things right it is often for the wrong reasons. Notice how it is so much easier to explain events after they happen, rather than before they happen. In practically everything imaginable, small changes in the initial conditions have the potential to snowball into massive significance. Considering how many unknown variables exist in everything we can think of it is quite amazing that one can be right about anything. No matter how well we have an idea of the major individual threads that impact things, a prediction is still not easy. The multiplicative effect of those threads is not merely the sum of the threads combined. It does sometimes feel like that in order to know anything, you must know everything. Even a vast amount of knowledge can be made redundant by unacknowledged unknown factors.

So how is it possible to know anything at all? Philosophers have thought about epistemology a lot and for good reasons, but that is another topic. In the practical world, we have tools such as the idea of first principles: deriving truths from the most basic, undeniable, unchanging truths. If all the great causal factors are discovered, this will allow for strong predictions based on the deep undercurrents. This appears to be the style of thinking that many of the most accurate forecasters use. For example, this book claims human obsolescence can be derived from the intrinsic characteristic of biological information systems when compared to electronic information systems. I cannot really guarantee this will stand the test of time, but it feels true. It all comes down to faith. On a positive note, life is fun when everything at the end of the day is built on uncertainty. There would be no room for imagination if the exact deterministic causality of anything was fully understood. The unknown is what gives room for exploration and magic.

When thinking of future possibilities, it is important to not only extrapolate known trends but to know how the trends combine and acknowledge the unknown factors that always disrupt predictions. The total sum of the effects of technologies is larger than the parts in isolation. An example of the convergent effects of technology will be the location-independence that will be achieved through the combined technologies of Virtual Reality and Starlink. Neither of these will revolutionize life within civilization by themselves, but together they will redefine humanity's relation with how we view physical spaces. These are only two *known* trends and the effects proposed here might be an underestimated.

The final stage of virtual reality will not only cater to the senses of sight and sound but also the olfactory and touch senses. There is a reason why business travel still exists in the age of video. The sensory feeling of shaking hands and being in the presence of someone is essential for creating bonds. Eventually, the sensory experience of real-life presence will be modelled to such accuracy as to give a proper feeling of being in the company of others. At the late stage of development, any activity (including sports, sex, travel) can be artificially reconstructed to such high fidelity that much of civilizational life will happen within VR boxes.

The technology of VR would not despatialize civilizational life by itself without developments in other fields. For example, a current bottleneck for very rural areas is data transfer speed. Starlink and similar ventures are probably going to solve the problem before VR technology gets to an advanced state. There are additionally several possible secondary effects of the proposed despatialization. The price of rural land and homes will rise as many well-paid urbanites become both willing and able to the countryside. Business travel will cease to exist. Privacy will be lost as every activity within the VR realm will be logged and analysed. City apartments will decrease in value and housing bubbles will permanently burst as despatialization occurs.

There is a genre of predictions, that may be true trends in isolation but despite of that are ultimately wrong in the bigger picture. One example of such a prediction is the claim *demographics is destiny*. This prediction correctly identifies that human traits are extremely heritable and are extremely reliable in predicting the productive potential of large masses of people. Ergo, the demographic constitution is the main arbiter of a nation's future. Yet in the grand scheme, it is an incorrect prediction. Because in the grand scheme, the world is not monocausal and large forces get drowned out by the maelstroms of even larger forces. In this case, we have identified the techno-industrial forces to be of the apparent apex of the metapredictive story of human life on Earth that would drown out the demographics-based prediction. Naturally, we ought to preserve room for doubt that there are even greater forces at play here, perhaps of extra-dimensional or extra-terrestrial nature as many have claimed. We must work with what we know.

The question of the timeline is certainly in the minds of many. When will so-and-so technology be invented and when will the big shifts occur? The answer is that it is less relevant to know the precise timeline than one might think. Even if progress in research across all fields suddenly halted down, we would still know the eventual trajectory of events. So, what if the period of great turmoil were to happen not in our lifetime, but the lifetime of our children or grandchildren? Any work done now will lessen their eventual burden, which might turn out to be too heavy unless the groundwork is laid within our generation. It will not hurt to be prepared three decades early. It will hurt to be prepared one day too late.

Bleeding Heart Elites

Understanding human nature is important if we want to see the future. Perhaps the most predictive approximation of human motivational endeavours is best described as Nietzsche's will to power. In short, within this paradigm, living entities are always striving to amass & exert a higher state of power. This being by no means unique for humans - but all living organisms. Animals, plants, bacteria, mushrooms, and so forth. This desire for higher power may even inhabit inorganic matter on all scales. Like gravity. On the sub-atomic and planetary scale, and everywhere in between. What is meant with Nietzschean power is nebulous and deliberately not systematized. Words cannot capture the ever-changing, infinitely complex and relative webs of power. As limited beings, we cannot accurately deduce the underlying complexity of all surrounding reality with words. We can at best understand power as a feeling, and that should be enough for us.

It is perhaps easier to explain what power is not. Power is certainly not merely political power or simple domination of other living beings. What is common with the inward-facing Zen monk and the outward-facing conquering warlord? Both are striving towards their perception of power. We may ask ourselves when have we witnessed someone not acting in accordance with their apparent will to power? Even the suicidal mind is clouded with warped perceptions where it sees self-destruction as a route for a higher state of power. And they may be right in their self-destruction, what would we know about it. Only to the outside observer are those impulses seen to be against one's will to power.

We should always be cautious when denouncing other peoples' behaviour as against their own self-interest. What is more likely is that we are lacking in empathy and unable to imagine the other's experience of reality. By training one's empathy and contemplating on power, one will gain a better understanding of what elevates other people and organisms.

The concepts of good and evil as fundamental forces might have a place in one’s worldview. That is fine. However, I ask you to reconsider their validity when it comes to understanding human ambitions. I would claim that the dichotomy of good/evil is in fact nothing but thought-terminating obstacles when it comes to understanding human nature. Admittedly it is true that there seems to be *good* behaviour and the opposite, *evil* behaviour. This model though simply has little predictive potential and at best, gives only a false understanding. Empathize long enough about peoples' incentives and their psychology and you will never again witness actions that require the person doing it to be categorized as either good or evil.

Elite factions are an implicitly understood idea by all. Everyone who talks of states doing this or that, for example “Russia invading Crimea” is referring to the elite factions of Russia and not the 144 million Russian spontaneously acting in unison. There are few major misconceptions regarding the elites which we should explore. The first misconception is that the so-called elites do not exist. Or if they do exist, that they are earnestly basically good. Or, that they are irredeemably pure evil, and that the social dynamics can be fundamentally changed by changing the people at the top.

Elite factions are a topic that must be confronted because the problem of human obsolescence is triggered by them. If humanity somehow were fully atomized and did not have elites with powerful in-group loyalties, the obsolescence of mankind would likely be dealt in another way. What are elites? They are powerful people networked together with other powerful people. There will come a tipping point when they notice that they are not reliant on the masses of humans for their power any longer. Simultaneously, those masses of people are becoming empowered by technological advances to disrupt the established world order. All elite factions are threatened by the competition of rival elites and those below them.

So where does earthly power truly reside? Some may choose to look up at the pyramid and look at official hierarchies and titles. Monarchs, central bankers, billionaires, presidents, corporate elites. These sure seem powerful. But one does not necessarily get the feeling that the visible elements are the peak of the pyramid.

The centre for world power is occulted. It cannot be directly observed because it desires to hide. However, its dominating presence can be inferred by the weight of its gravity. It is easy to mock conspiracy theorists for not knowing everything. But ask any denier of conspiracies to draw an alternative diagram of power in society, and he will construct his own conspiracy in response. Simplifying the complex networks into a simpler narrative obviously removes all complexity, but this is a sorely necessary task to making sense of the most powerful.

By far the most powerful elite faction in this world is the Western Elite. Coincidentally it is also the most shadowy. We know the apparent leaders of Russia; it is Putin and his friends. In China, it is Xi Jinping and his Party. So, what is the actual constitution of the Western elite? Who are they and what do they want? Are they hierarchically led by bloodlines of ancient royalty as some claim? Or as the liberals believe, nobody is in charge and opposite forces of power are so balanced and mutually conflicting that they effectively neutralize each other out? While still being somehow aligned together with enough nationalistic consciousness to be resistant against outside subversion?

It might seem paradoxical to the uninitiated that the less visible actors could also be the most powerful. In our everyday lived experience, power is highly correlated with visibility. This gives us the bias to think that what we see (celebrities and politicians) is also the most powerful and relevant. What few understand is that after a certain threshold, power needs to hide for increased power.

Humans have a natural tendency to reflexively oppose uncontrollable concentrations of powers. This makes visibility an obstacle for ultimate power. For example, the present $200B net worth of Amazon e-commerce company founder Jeff Bezos has not gone unnoticed. As a result, there have been calls by some to nationalize Amazon or use antitrust laws to split it up. Ergo, actions that would decrease the power of Jeff Bezos. Imagine though if there were mechanisms for Amazon/Bezos to hide its ever-growing domination, for example by diversifying its operation under different brand names? Or if Bezos managed to somehow hide his stake in the company. Either way, he would attract far less opposition. For those yet unaware, it cannot be overstated how concentrated every significant field is. Not enough know that only a handful of media conglomerates control essentially all Western media production (AT&T, Comcast, Disney, ViacomCBS &

News Corp). The handlers of these organisations are obviously aware that they are not only sitting on revenue streams, but on tools of control that shape the lived experience of every human in our civilization. That is the illusion of choice we are given in essentially every domain of life. At least in North Korea and the People's Republic of China, the chain of command is more transparent.

Why are we unable to make a map of the organizational structure of the elites? The world's legal-economic system is set up in a way to allow the concealment of what they own. If the world's most powerful men did not want tax havens to exist, you can bet the US military would end tax havens within 24 hours. Also, it is safe to ignore the Forbes Billionaire List. There is absolutely no way to gauge the true wealth of people from the outside. Forbes is propaganda.

While we cannot decipher the exact structure of the elites, we can deduce several things about them by looking at their reflection from the world around us. Society is always downstream from elite power. Consider the fact that all elites throughout history have always tried to shape their domain in their vision. This does not indicate that every detail about society is micro-engineered to the specifications of the elite's desires, but we can conclude that the broad strokes of society do resemble the wishes of the elites.

Are the talking heads who come on the global scene to express the ideas masterminds of their own ideas or are they assets that propagate the ideas of more powerful people? It does not actually matter. If we know what the agendas they advocate for, there are no practical differences to know if they are the originators of their plans or simply another executive puppet among many. The most powerful in society do not have to go up on the stage to give speeches to advance their own interests. Just as the CIA funnelled money to modern art during the Cold War without the artists knowing it themselves,[47] influence can be propagated without the participating people having the slightest clue about it.

Observe that military officers on the battlefield frontlines never wear their brass openly because that makes them sniper targets. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the rise of Liberal Democracy, i.e., rule-from-shadows, correlated with the development of gun rifling and popular availability of explosives. The 19th century was a terrible time for the visible power of monarchs because of political assassinations.

The Western elites are not necessarily strictly hierarchical but possibly rhizomatic. Connected like the decentralized rhizomes of underground plant stems. With central nodes largely in agreement over the important goals. Compartmentalized to obscure efforts and hide connection points. The view of rhizomes in contrast to a strict pyramid hierarchy is an useful alternative to add some nuance. Ultimately though, one has no option but to accept the enshrouding fog of war to be a reality of life. Only because we cannot call out the real commanders from a sea of soldiers, does not mean they do not have an internal hierarchy. We can only logically infer that too the level of organization is too complex for them to be unrelated and spontaneous.

What could possibly make one believe that much if not all of the modern elites are not the naive, bleeding-heart do-gooders that they claim to be? One major factor is the documentation of historical conspiracies and clandestine activity until this day. When it comes to deducing the mental landscape of the most powerful people on Earth, there is no substitute for empirical evidence. There is no single event or fact that would nor should convince anyone about the assumed beliefs of our dominant elites. However, once one has gained enough knowledge of these strange things, it should at least make one highly suspicious. Clearly, these have been winning tactics for several centuries at the very least. Power-hungry people are not limited to the same self-constrictive beliefs and actions that average people are.

There are a thousand individual rabbit holes to go down and research on. I would like to remind you that powerful people are not all-powerful – they have the tools of secrecy, scheming, and networking, but they are not capable to kill switch and memory-hole all uncomfortable facts out of existence. On the same note, all this knowledge being publicly available has not seemingly posed any problems for the elites. World history is filled to the brim with uncovered secret societies, conspiracies, plots, clandestine operations, honeypots, false flags, war crimes, and other shady stuff. There is no argument as to why it would be any different today. Here is a brief list of some of the entry-level interesting stuff that anyone in their right mind should have a lot of questions about.

1099 Knights of Malta

1425 Freemasonry

1540 Jesuit Order

1614 Rosicrucianism

1776 Bavarian Illuminati

1815 Battle of Waterloo

1832 Skull and Bones

1872 Albert Pike

1878 Bohemian Grove

1881 Gen'yōsha

1909 Rhodes-Milner Round Table

1914 Black Hand Franz Ferdinand

1926 Operation Trust

1945 Firebombing of Tokyo

1945 Hiroshima & Nagasaki

1945 Bombing of Dresden

1945 General Patton assassinated by OSS agent Douglas Bazata

1945 Operation Paperclip

1945 Nuremberg Trials

1948 Operation Mockingbird

1953 CIA Iranian coup

1953 Project MKUltra

1954 Bilderberg Group

1954 Lavon Affair

1956 Operation Drop Kick

1956 COINTELPRO

1962 Operation Northwoods
1963 JFK assassination
1968 Club of Rome
1974 Food Pyramid Scam
1981 Project Grill Flame
1985 Iran–Contra affair
1987 Rex 84
1987 Operation Nimble Archer
1988 Operation Praying Mantis
1990 CIA drug trafficking
1990 Nayirah testimony
1992 Ruby Ridge
1992 Agenda 21
1993 HAARP
1993 Waco Siege
1994 M/S Estonia
2001 9/11
2003 Iraq WMDs
2004 DARPA LifeLog/Facebook
2004 Dutroux Affair
2001 BelgaCom Op Socialist
2010 Arab Spring
2011 Occupy Wall Street
2013 Edward Snowden NSA leaks

2014 Euromaidan Sniper killed both pro- and anti-government people

2014 Syria war chemical weapons hoax

2015 Tianjin Explosion (Supercomputer)

2016 Seth Rich

2016 Pizzagate

2016 Panama Papers

2016 South Korea President shamanistic cult

2017 MBS Saudi Arabia Purge ($800B confiscated)

2017 Paddock Las Vegas massacre

2017 WikiLeaks Vault 7

2018 Billionaire bunkers in New Zealand

2019 Jeffrey Epstein assassination

A lot of online discourse about elite theory revolves around occultism and bloodlines. Some allege that the present world is ruled by a few select families that have ruled for centuries, even millennia. I have not invested time into researching that and cannot say if that is feasible. As for the topic of occultism though, have you seen the picture of famed elite occultist Marina Abramović together with Baron Jacob Rothschild posing in front of the painting *Satan Summoning his Legions*? How about the media figure Anderson Cooper pictured on a bed with his socialite mother Gloria Vanderbilt and accompanied by strange art depicting human sacrifice? Too much should not be read into these but it is simply low-born willful ignorance to deny that something is going on. Whatever beliefs they may have, they are not basic in their thinking.

Blackmail Networks

Guaranteeing the loyalty of subjects and allies has been one of the main political problem that leaders have wrestled with since the dawn of time. People tend to change their loyalties when it benefits them. The task of the leaders is to maximize the cost of betrayal. No one can afford an endless supply of rewards to give out in exchange for loyalty, which makes the threat of punishment usually the cheaper and more effective option. Ultimate loyalty is achieved when the fate of the subject is wholly tied to the tools of the master. While we are throughout our life propagandized to believe that it is merit and competency that determines our position in society, the truth is that loyalty trumps merit any day. And this is for good reasons. Hierarchies can survive occasional incompetency, but they cannot survive disloyalty.

Compromising blackmail is perhaps the most insufficiently discussed topic in modern political discourse. It is no wonder that it controversial: its mere existence causes implications that shake the theoretical foundations that our political systems are constructed on. As to date, blackmail is the most effective form of coerced loyalty. It is fairly easy to gain and activate when desired. It has presumably not been a major tool of control until quite recently. Before the mass-production of small portable cameras and recording equipment, evidence for action was mostly garnered through witness testimony. The past century has been the golden age of blackmail.

If we were to naively believe the mainstream narrative on blackmail, it is something that only happens between competing states. The high-profile cases that have been covered extensively by mainstream Western media in recent history are the Trump-Russia conspiracy and the story of Chinese spy Christine Fang who gained leverage over up-and-coming US politicians. It makes sense that Western elites have an interest in not letting Western officials become compromised by rival elite factions. The unspoken reality however is that by all odds, the biggest blackmailers in the West are homegrown. If you have blackmail on someone, you do not want someone else to have it too on the same person.

For an in-depth analysis of how the blackmail network might operate, I implore you to check out Patrick Ryan's work regarding Blackmail Inflation. Blackmail Inflation explores the infrastructure that would have to be in place for utilizing blackmail. The history of the blackmail networks might go even centuries back: there are interesting coincidences that suggest Queen Victoria of the British Empire (1819-1901) was the first major blackmail victim of the networks that extend to the current day. The lingerie company Victoria's Secret is owned by billionaire Les Wexner, whose hedge funds were managed by none other than Jeffrey Epstein. The same Epstein that was involved with Prince Andrew, a direct descendant of Queen Victoria.

The story of Jeffrey Epstein will go down as one of the fascinating events of the early 21st century. A humble math teacher with a suspicious lack of credentials became a Wall Street guy and rose to the proximity of the apparent Western elites such as Les Wexner. Together with Ghislaine Maxwell, he trafficked children and presumably blackmailed first-tier American politicians and other powerful people on the island Little St. James. Did Epstein work alone or as an agent of an organization such as CIA or Mossad? Considering the success of Epstein, it would be starry-eyed to believe he was the one and only blackmailer operating in Western politics. When Epstein got jailed in 2019, he committed "suicide" under bizarrely sketchy circumstances. Who killed Epstein, and why? How do you prove he ever died in the first place? If they can cover up killing in a maximum-security prison cell, they could certainly cover up his escape and identity change.

There is a possible end coming for blackmail. The technologies of automatic video manipulation (commonly referred to as Deepfake) are getting so good that they will make fakes indistinguishable from reality. The emergence of Deepfake technology will shape the way we view reality. We will no longer believe confessions, photos, or videos to be real as anyone will have the means to reconstruct image and sound. Prestigious mainstream institutions will probably become the sole arbitrators of what is considered "real" and "fake" and even the most heinous acts will be excused as mere deepfakes if approved by the prestige manufacturers. It will be interesting to know, how will the blackmailers and the blackmailed react? Will the blackmailers try to leverage their control over the blackmailed to another form while they still can? Will the blackmailed attack those that held them hostage when the public or judiciary will no longer take blackmail as evidence?

The key issue most people have concerning conspiracies is internalizing the mechanism of compartmentalization. As covered in sub-chapter *Incentives for Elite Factions*, the Manhattan Project is the best example of a gigantic project that was kept secret from the public and even from enemy military intelligence. Most of the interesting clandestine operations and conspiracies have a great impact and are assumed to involve hundreds or even thousands of people. No way that many people could consistently hold a big and juicy secret? That is indeed right. They are instead holding a thousand small secrets. Secrets that are neatly packed in separate containers and that are individually uninteresting. Together they make up a solid whole that is decipherable from above only. If the operation planners know what they want, there is essentially no limit to how many sub-operations they can partition it into.

Surely compartmentalization alone cannot keep all the juicy secrets hidden. That is correct, too. Leaks of interesting projects do semi-regularly get published on the less moderated corners of the internet. Places that few normal people visit. However so long mainstream media does not cover it, it does not happen in the mind of many. Quite surprisingly, leaks have little effect on public consciousness even when the whistleblowers make it their life purpose to bring out the truth. The idea of global surveillance was once a paranoid and nutty conspiracy theory until Edward Snowden came out in 2013 with mountains of evidence on the actions of the National Security Agency (NSA). Along the same lines, Julian Assange's Wikileaks has uncovered a diverse set of plots throughout the years and transformed mere conspiracies into undeniable reality. Regular people are still unaware of these basic things which is by design. The mechanisms of discrediting leakers and information suppression clearly are sophisticated enough for whistleblowers to not destabilize the regimes and organizations that carry out the covert operations. Compartmentalization works, but even when leaks happen, they do not seem to shake the system.

A short introduction into the art of propaganda and social control might be in order. Even as our world is throughout occupied by these forces, few recognize them. And that is coincidentally exactly how peak propaganda works: it is woven deeply into us so that it is not perceptible to those who are still within the programming. Just as cult members will not see themselves be brainwashed, neither does a member of society who still subscribes to the rules of society. What are societies but all-encompassing cults?

Propaganda is the everyday programming we are accustomed to see everywhere: narratives with selective truths to further agendas. No one is above this: all people by the virtue of being human can not help but propagate stories, facts and reactions to others in order to influence. Most peddlers of propaganda are not consciously motivated schemers, but normal people sharing earnestly what they have heard. The first step of mental liberation from the ever-present programming is to realize *I am not immune to propaganda* and to internalize this understanding deeply. There is no shame in admitting to being the victim of manipulation. We all are.

By making anything happen, you redirect the attention and energies of people. Spectacles will always force a reaction from the crowds. Craft enough spectacles for people to talk about with each other, and you have constructed their social reality. What was significant about the drug overdose death of former convict George Floyd in the summer of 2020? Not much, yet a handful of media organizations managed to effortlessly spin it into a worldwide event that pulled the heartstrings of easily influenced people.

Ritual of Life Affirmation

Proceeding with the assumption that you have chosen the Wilderness Option as the most feasible path forward, I have thought about its digestion. And why it is such a tough nut to crack. While this work is intended to explore the relevant factors of the world order through logical and easily provable claims, its negative emotional charge cannot be ignored. This is very much the opposite of a beautiful story that I would prefer to tell you.

We are inclined to like facts and narratives based on how they make us feel. Do these claims make me feel more powerful and important? Or does it decrease my feeling of power? This tends to be the deciding factor for the average person. Maybe it is a good thing. We have limited time at our disposal to research the truths and lies we encounter, and it is undoubtedly better as a rule to believe in truths that make one feel good.

I did not arrive at these conclusions with pleasure. They have caused many sleepless nights and these ideas did upend several of my earlier life plans. As I imagine the ideas to have done for you too if you recognize the premises and conclusions to be accurate. To add the cherry on the cake, there's little immediate social value in these truths.

When struck with an earth-shaking revelation, the early excitement drowns away with the tough realization that few are as enthusiastic about our truths as we are. There are many who give in to the bitterness and scorn those that have yet to see the light. Even dehumanizing those that do not have eyes to see with. As the scorn is often mutual, it is a humongous task to respect people who take you for a crazy person. Be patient. Meet the naysayers with calm indifference. They will understand the gravity at their own pace. Be a beacon of light for those who are open to ideas. There are still people out there who are curious minded but have not yet been initiated.

If we were to introduce these ideas to someone without desiring them anxiety - maybe we would focus solely on the nice aspects of the Wilderness Option. Tight-knit community! Raising cute farm animals! Cottagecore aesthetics! No wage-slavery! Health and freedom! In tune with nature! Popular things such as these might be used as tools to bait the interests of others or used in social situations that demanded for mellow opinions. On the other hand, there is ultimately no shying away from the hard truths. The reasonable and moderate homesteader is not going to make it into the post-divergence world. Communities with uncompromising quarantines are absolute necessities to shield against the most obvious nanoscale attack vectors.

Social reality is that which builds up our values, dreams, ambitions, worldview. Every time we talk with another person, social reality is being constructed. A problem with social reality is that is always downstream from the-powers-that-be. Whoever it be in a society that has power - the clergy, the press, the financial elite - social reality is generated mostly through their wishes. They become the arbiters of what is popular and important as their ideas get talked about by people in everyday settings. Even if one tries to inoculate himself against their influence, he cannot do it but by avoiding other people. Adopting social reality as one's own pillar is good for prestige and allies but terrible if one wants to get to the underlying foundation of truths. Neurodivergent people (autism, ADHD...) seem to be uniquely capable of disregarding this problematic social reality. Perhaps the trailblazing into the woods by these neurodivergents will grow communities large enough for the braver neurotypicals to join as well.

Hypothetical futures that shape our vision are subjected on us since through various channels since our earliest years. These tended to be mostly utopian - flying cars, tall megacities, holographic digital stuff. In recent years dystopian images have become more abundant. We may enjoy fiction, but it is essential to not have one's imagination consumed by these visions. All the culturally produced social reality futures are mere images. They are not the actual future. We must take a grip of our future vision and reflect: what is our present reality genuinely like? What are the objective factors that control events? What is important? What are we on this earth for?

Embrace struggle. Once we make a friend of struggle, we will only be revigorated by nightmarish hardships that we will certainly face when we take the path that we must. With this, I do not wish to cause despair, and if I were myself despairing, I would not write this. We live in the most interesting time of history and are in fact blessed. None of our ancestors or children have been as lucky as we are. Do not get bogged down by those unfortunate souls who lack the will to live. Those who can see, will see. The universe does not care if we have an easy life, and it is an extreme privilege to even entertain a thought that one should deserve an easy life. Many are angry or grieving the fact that they cannot have the lives they were brought up to idealize - this anger comes from being fed false narratives as to how the world operates. All we got to do is to make the best use of our lot. If we are not taking conscious control over our world, we will remain a feather blown away by the forces of history and circumstances.

Even when we cannot find any problems in a logical claim and admit it to be true, our basic programming tends to default to what is constructed by social reality. Perhaps because we do not want to be alone with our ideas and think about stuff that others can not relate to. To combat this instinct there is no substitute for daily contemplation of our existential purpose. We need to develop a crystal-clear vision in order to avoid the emotional investment in the current events delivered by the news cycle and gossip of our peers. Going about our daily lives makes us want to forget about these harder truths. I endorse incorporating daily rituals to never lose sight on what matters.

What meaning is there left for life, if our worship of technological progress is withdrawn from the equation? Is life even worth living if the world does not fit the mould of our manufactured desires? Yes, it is. There will still be human progress and spiritual ascendancy. The world is magical if we will it. We have a Why, and we will take a generation of pain to give our successors the gift of experiencing the blessed joys of life. In the return of primitiveness, there will still be space to cultivate the nobler instincts. Striving for ever finer details in all actions. Perfecting the movement of the body in gait, dance, and manners. Sculpting tree, stone and metal into tools and heirloom art. Match-making the enamoured at intoxicated festivals. Stories of hunt, exploration and danger, accompanied by live music of stringed instruments. There will still be so much to live for. As Nietzsche said, man is something to shall be overcome. Man is a rope, tied between beast and overman - a rope over an abyss. What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not an end.

Notes & References

Due to popular request the 2nd Edition has been updated with references to some of the claims. These were exempted from the original draft because of the author's desire to keep the flow of the text pleasant. Additionally, the central hypothesis of technological divergence does not rest on many positive claims that can be referenced. It is assumed that the reader is highly proficient in using search engines.

The work is not intended to persuade but is verbalized to give a clearer form to the hypothesis of technological divergence. Hopefully this will be dissected mercilessly by those who see the world differently, and help those who have reached similar conclusions.

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